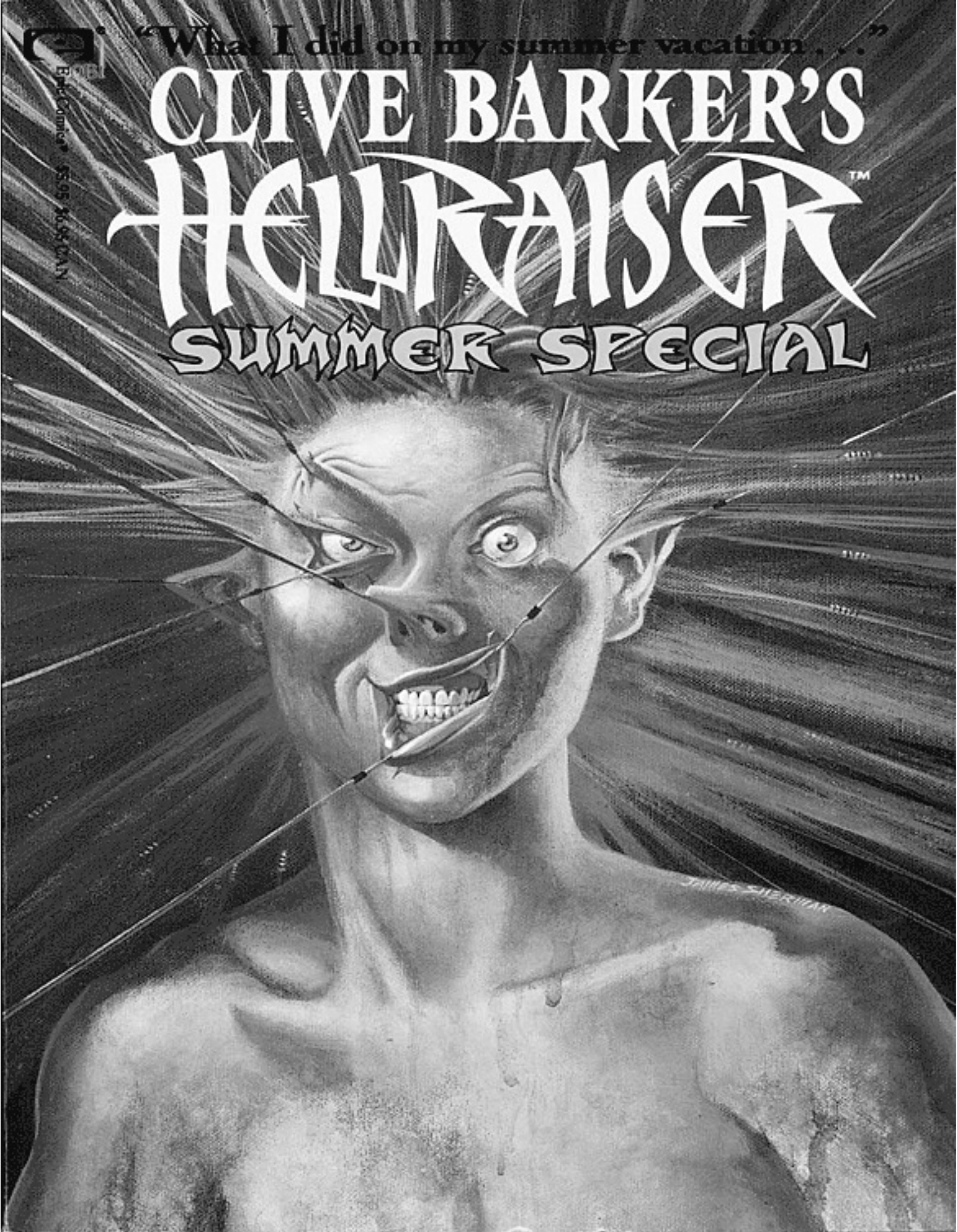
VISIT…


"What I did on my summer vacation . . ."
CLIVE BARKER'S
HELLRAISER™
SUMMER SPECIAL
Epic Comics
$5.95 $6.95 CAN.
JAMES SHERIDAN

The Lesson
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Babycakes
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The Devil's Absolution
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To My Son
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Old Wives' Tale
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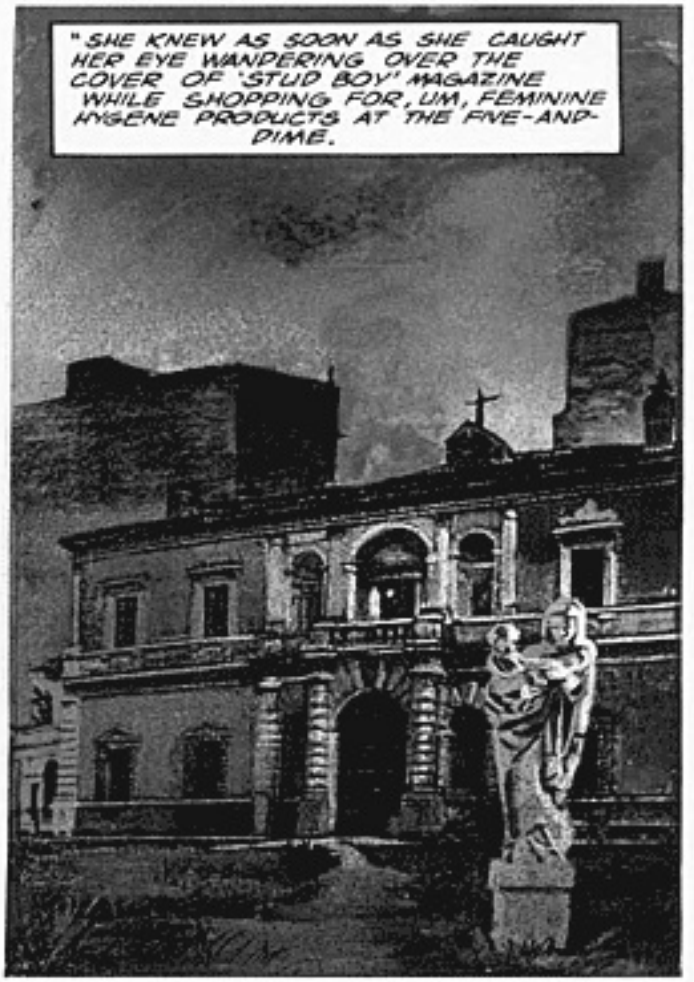
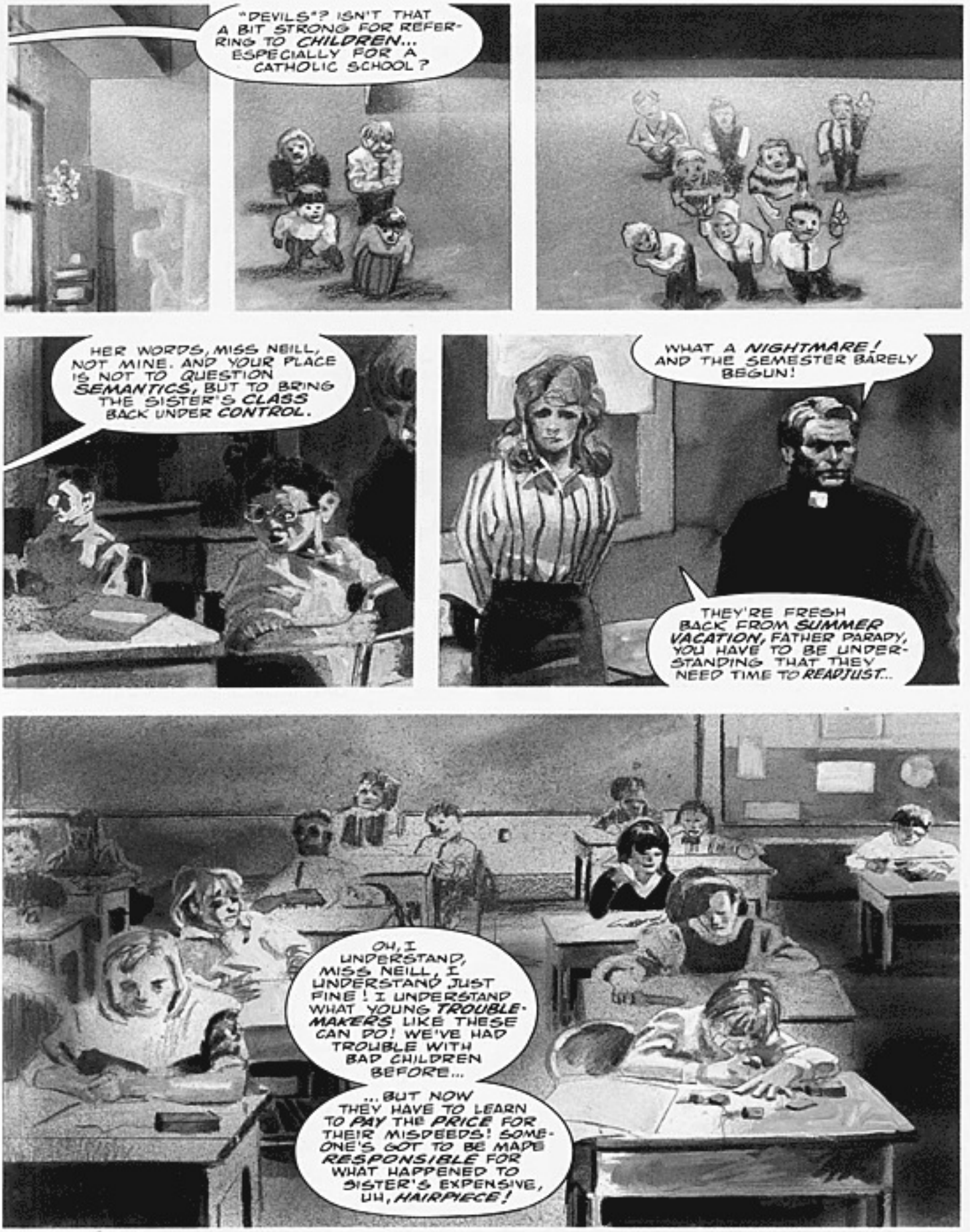

"SHE KNEW AS SOON AS SHE CAUGHT HER EYE WANDERING OVER THE COVER OF 'STUD BOY' MAGAZINE WHILE SHOPPING FOR, UM, FEMININE HYGENE PRODUCTS AT THE FIVE-AND-DIME.


"DEVILS"? ISN'T THAT A BIT STRONG FOR REFERRING TO CHILDREN... ESPECIALLY FOR A CATHOLIC SCHOOL?
HER WORDS, MISS NEILL, NOT MINE. AND YOUR PLACE IS NOT TO QUESTION SEMANTICS, BUT TO BRING THE SISTER'S CLASS BACK UNDER CONTROL.
WHAT A NIGHTMARE! AND THE SEMESTER BARELY BEGUN!
THEY'RE FRESH BACK FROM SUMMER VACATION, FATHER PARADY, YOU HAVE TO BE UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY NEED TIME TO READJUST...
OH, I UNDERSTAND, MISS NEILL, I UNDERSTAND JUST FINE! I UNDERSTAND WHAT YOUNG TROUBLEMAKERS LIKE THESE CAN DO! WE'VE HAD TROUBLE WITH BAD CHILDREN BEFORE...
...BUT NOW THEY HAVE TO LEARN TO PAY THE PRICE FOR THEIR MISDEEDS! SOMEONE'S GOT TO BE MADE RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO SISTER'S EXPENSIVE, UH, HAIRPIECE!

IT'S NOT THE INQUISITION, FATHER...
AND YOU'RE ONLY A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER, MISS NEILL, I'D WATCH MY MOUTH!
MAYBE "ONLY" BUT I FIGURE A PRETTY GOOD ONE OR YOU WOULDN'T HAVE HIRED ME IN THE FIRST PLACE!
WHY NOT GIVE ME A CHANCE TO DO MY JOB AND SEE IF I CAN'T WORK A MIRACLE OR TWO WITH THESE IMPS?
VERY WELL, BUT REMEMBER...
...SOMEONE'S GOT TO PAY!
PAY TWO BUCKS, AND YOU CAN SEE NICER GORILLA'S THAN HIM AT THE ZOO!
Hee Hee Hee Hee Hee
YOU LIKE THAT, HUH? GOOD, 'CAUSE I WANT US TO LIKE EACH OTHER! MY NAME'S MS. NEILL, AND...
LET'S START WITH YOU--JOEY, RIGHT?
Mmm-Hmm.
OH, A SHY ONE, huh? THAT'S OKAY, I WAS SHY WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE, TOO!
I BET LOTS OF KIDS HERE ARE SHY... LET'S BREAK THE ICE WITH A STORY! WOULD YOU LIKE TO TELL US ONE, JOE? MAYBE ABOUT WHAT YOU DID ON YOUR SUMMER VACATION?
I DON'T KNOW... YOU DON'T REALLY WANNA HEAR...
OH, OF COURSE WE DO! PLEASE TELL US!
OKAY, THEN... YOU ASKED FOR IT...

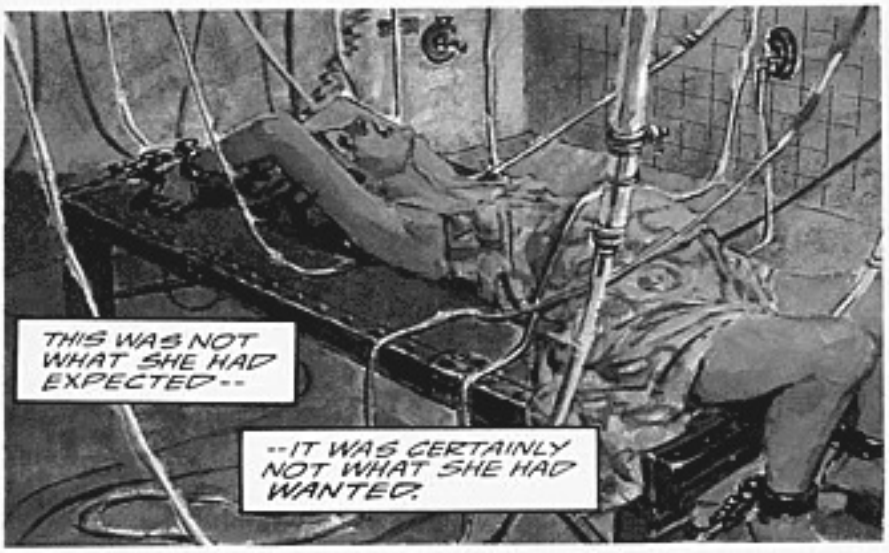
NINE MONTHS.
NINE MONTHS OF WHITENESS, AND LONELINESS, AND FEELING THE CHILD GROW INSIDE HER.
babycakes
Faye Perozich
writer
Gerry Talaoc
artist
Phil Felix
letterer
NINE MONTHS OF WAITING--WAITING TO SEE HIM, TO TOUCH HIM --
--TO RECEIVE WHAT HE HAD PROMISED TO GIVE.
NO FEAR, JUST... NINE MONTHS...
IT WOULD BE SOON.

THE MEN OF HER WORLD COULD NOT GIVE HER A CHILD.
OH, SHE'D TRIED...
...THEY'D FAILED.
THE DOCTORS SAID SHE WAS BARREN.
X-RAY
KEEP OUT
THE ADOPTION AGENCIES DIDN'T HAVE BABIES FOR A WOMAN WITH NO HUSBAND...
...AND THE BLACK MARKET DIDN'T HAVE BABIES FOR A WOMAN WITH NO MONEY.
BUT THERE WAS STILL ONE PLACE SHE HADN'T TRIED...
...HELL.

SHE KNEW OF THE CENOBITES.
KNEW WHAT THEY COULD DO...
...WHAT THEY WERE CAPABLE OF...
THEY HAD TAKEN CHILDREN.
PERHAPS THEY COULD GIVE HER ONE.
PERHAPS THEY COULD MAKE A DEAL.
OR PERHAPS SHE COULD FIND AN EXTRAORDINARY CENOBITE.
...ONE WITH WHOM SHE COULD PRODUCE AN EXTRAORDINARY CHILD.
WELL.
ANOTHER LOST LAMB.
IF SHE COULD SOLVE THE PUZZLE--OPEN THE GATES, TO HIM...

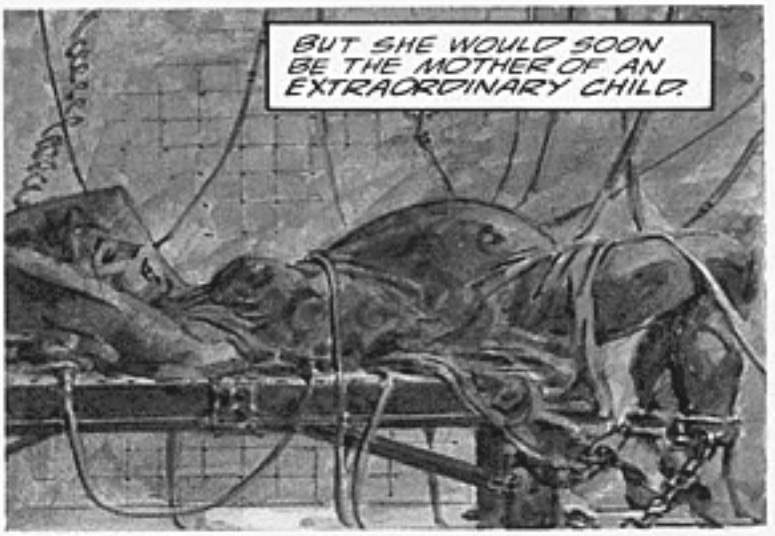
DIDN'T TAKE YOU VERY LONG. YOU MUST HAVE BEEN IN A HURRY.
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?
I SEE.
MANY EXPERIENCES ARE POSSIBLE.
WHAT... EXACTLY DO YOU WANT?
I WANT A CHILD.

A CHILD IS POSSIBLE. MANY CHILDREN ARE POSSIBLE.
YES, MANY CHILDREN.
"MANY CHILDREN."
MAKE YOURSELF READY TO RECEIVE THE FIRST CHILD.
READY WHEN YOU ARE...
NO!
OH, I'M ALWAYS READY.


THIS WAS NOT WHAT SHE HAD EXPECTED--
--IT WAS CERTAINLY NOT WHAT SHE HAD WANTED.

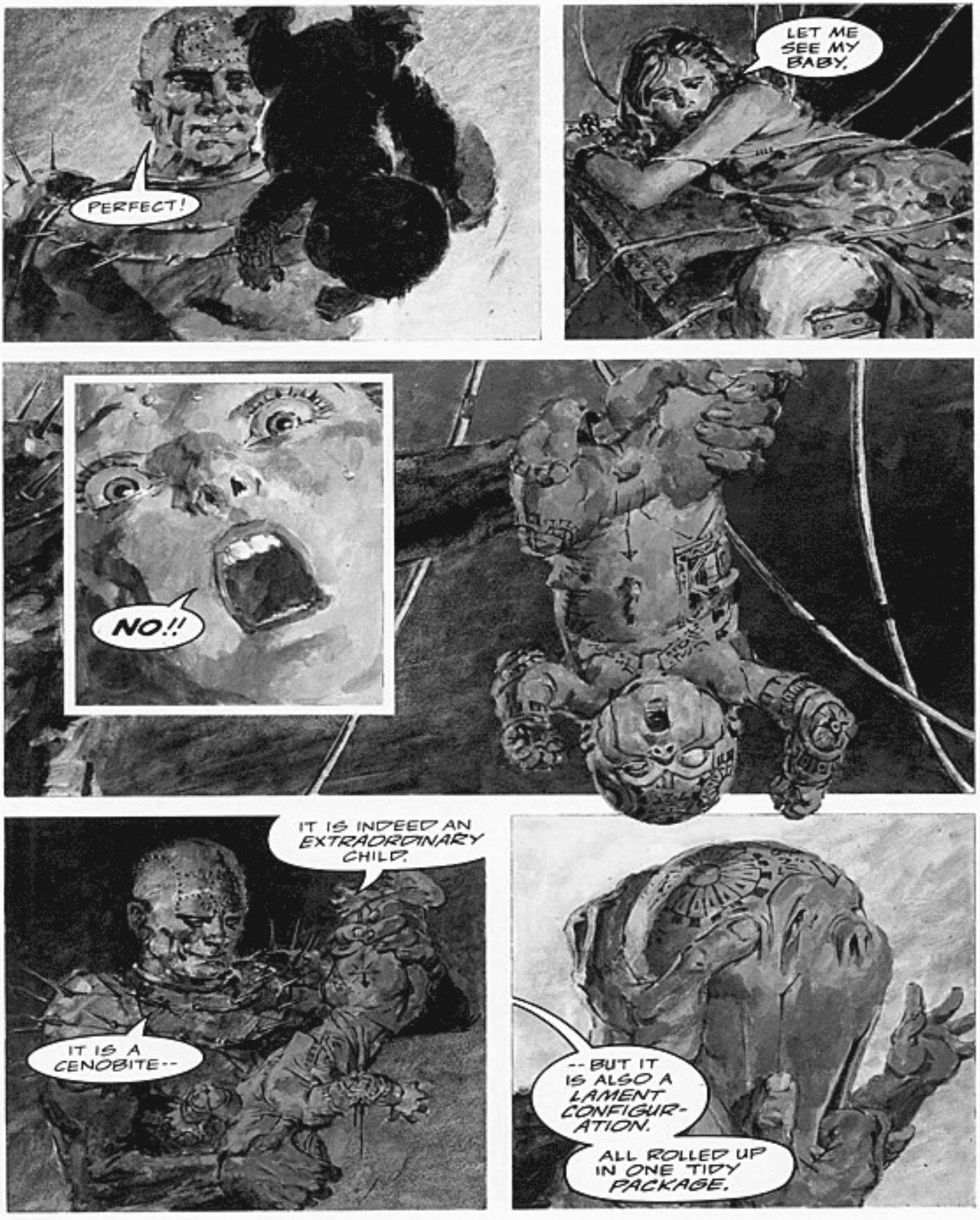
NINE MONTHS. A LONG TIME TO WAIT.

SHE COULD FEEL ITS FINGERS WORKING INSIDE HER.
IT WOULD BE VERY SOON.


BUT SHE WOULD SOON BE THE MOTHER OF AN EXTRAORDINARY CHILD.

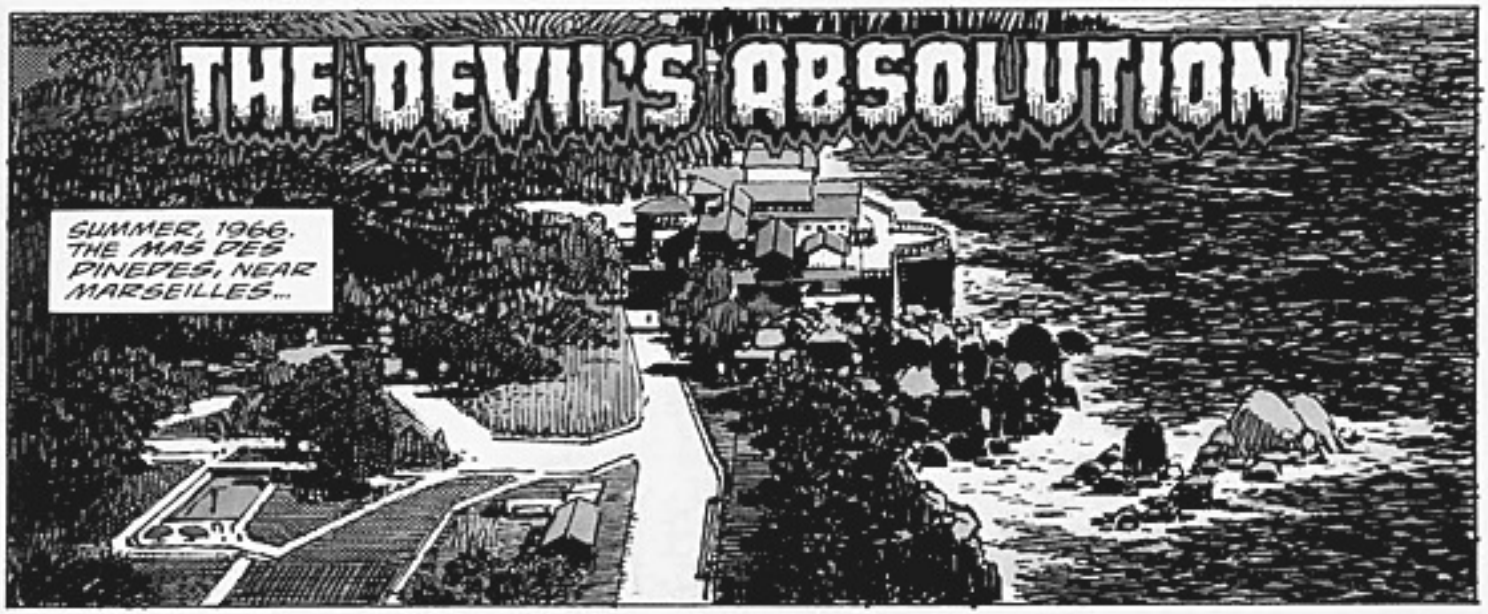
AH! READY TO COME OUT OF THE OVEN, MY PRECIOUS?

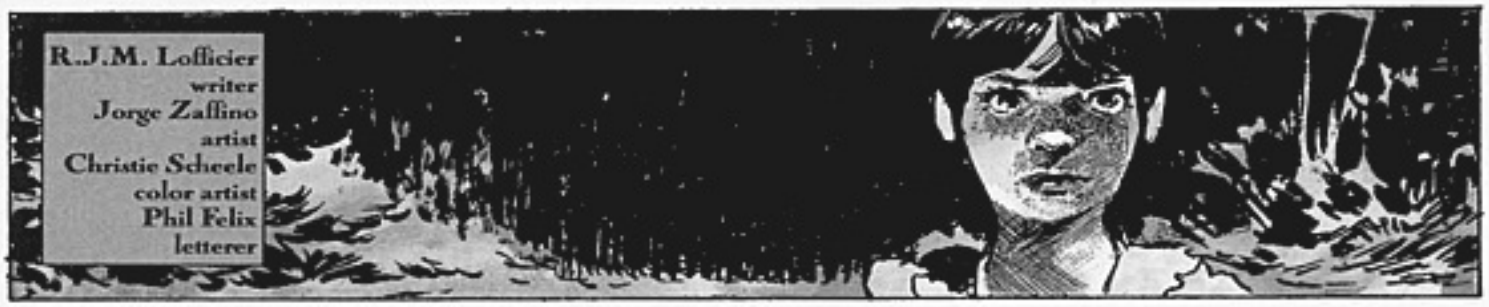
AAAAAAA!!


PERFECT!
LET ME SEE MY BABY.
NO!!
IT IS INDEED AN EXTRAORDINARY CHILD.
IT IS A CENOBITE--
--BUT IT IS ALSO A LAMENT CONFIGURATION.
ALL ROLLED UP IN ONE TIDY PACKAGE.

PROPERLY HANDLED, YOUR CHILDREN WILL OPEN THE DOORWAY TO A NEW REALM IN HELL.
AREN'T YOU PROUD?
YES. MAKE ANOTHER.
NO, PLEASE... NO...
ANOTHER NINE MONTHS.
AND ANOTHER...
... AND ANOTHER.
BUT THEN, SHE HAD PLENTY OF TIME.
ALL THE TIME IN HELL.

DIDJA LIKE IT?
L-LIKE CAN MEAN SO MANY THINGS TO SO MANY PEOPLE...
W-WHAT?
LIKE IF YOU DIDN'T KNOW BETTER, YOU'D SAY MY PUZZLE WAS A PHALLIC SYMBOL.
I SAID, FATHER PARADY TOLD US YOU LIKE TO COLLECT THIMBLES.
NEVER MIND. IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU LIKED YOUR STORY... LET'S TRY ANOTHER ONE, SHALL WE?
WHO WANTS TO TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED TO SISTER MARY FRANCIS'S WIG?
OH, COME ON, NOW... SURELY ONE OF YOU GUYS CAN TELL ME THAT ONE!
I'VE GOT A STORY, TEACHER... ABOUT MY SUMMER VACATION!
YOU, DO, DO YOU... ANNE?
DID YOU HAVE A NICE SUMMER?
NICE DOESN'T BEGIN TO DESCRIBE IT...


THE DEVIL'S ABSOLUTION
SUMMER, 1966. THE MAS DES PINEDES, NEAR MARSEILLES...

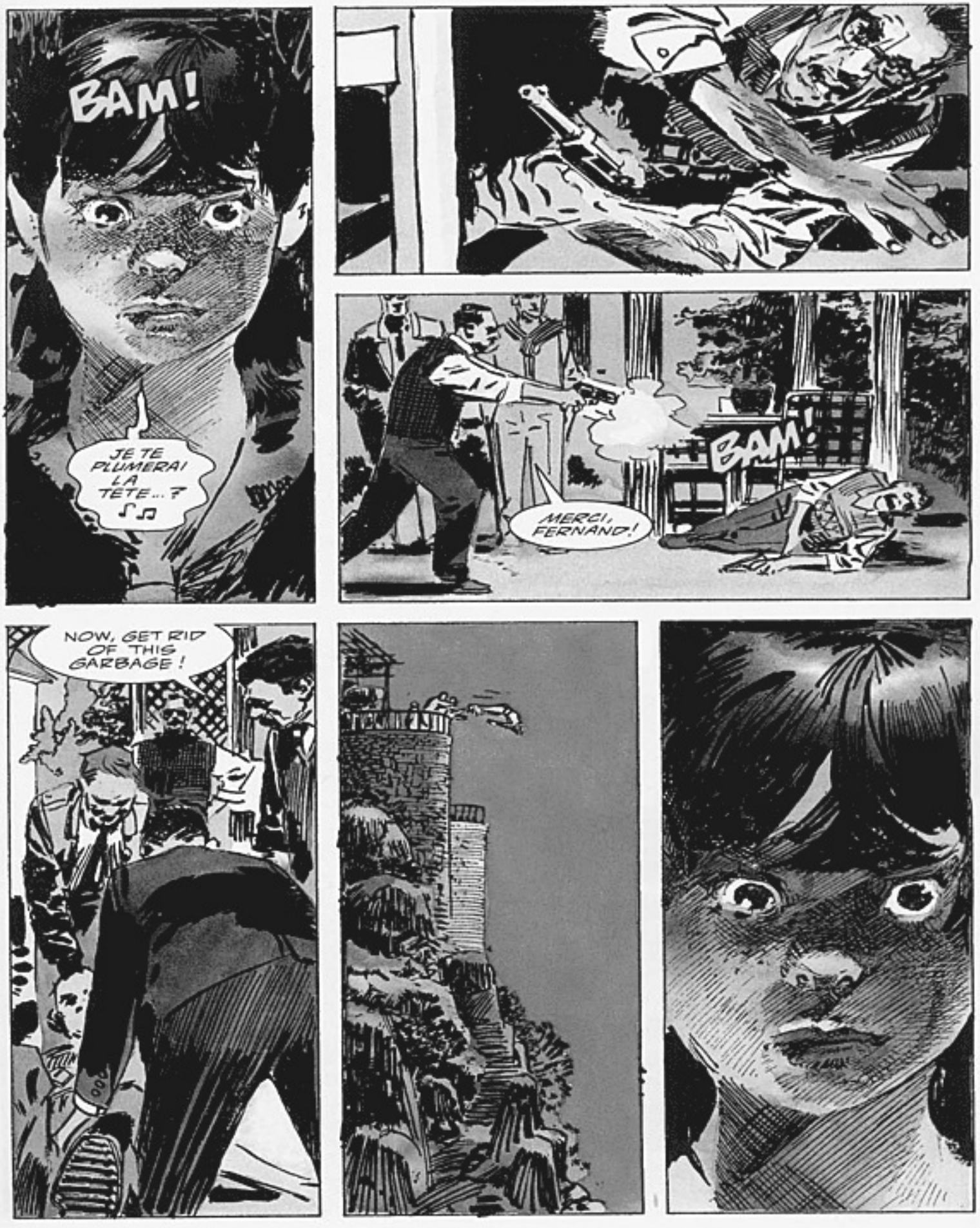

R.J.M. Lofficier
writer
Jorge Zaffino
artist
Christie Scheele
color artist
Phil Felix
letterer

FIRST, WE'LL DRINK A PASTIS, ALDO. THEN, WE'LL TALK...
WHATEVER YOU SAY, MEME!

MERCI, ADELE!
SO, WHY'D YOU WANT TO SEE ME?

BECAUSE YOU'RE A PIG, ALDO. I WOULDN'T FEED YOUR CARCASS TO MY DOGS!

YOU'VE BEEN SELLING DRUGS INSIDE FRANCE...
...AGAINST MY ORDERS!
THE FAMILY NEEDS TO MOVE WITH THE TIMES, MEME...
♩ JE TE PLUMERAI... ♪♩
...YOUR CONSCIENCE IS OUT OF DATE!
SIT DOWN, ALDO. I'M STILL LE PATRON!
MAYBE YOU'RE OUT OF DATE, TOO!
MAYBE WE NEED NEW BLOOD...
NEW DIR--
BAM!


BAM!
JE TE PLUMERAI LA TÊTE...?
BAM!
MERCI, FERNAND!
NOW, GET RID OF THIS GARBAGE!

AU REVOIR, MES AMIS!
ANNE! ANNE! WHERE ARE YOU, MY PICHOUNE?
AH! THERE YOU ARE!
♪♫ ALOUETTE...
WHY ARE YOU HIDING FROM YOUR PAPI?
SHOULD WE PLAY CACHE-CACHE?
YOUR GRANDPAPA IS FINISHED WITH HIS BUSINESS...
COME ON THE TERRACE. WE'LL WATCH THE SUNSET TOGETHER.
WHAT WERE YOU SINGING JUST NOW? ALOUETTE?
"ALOUETTE, GENTILLE ALOUETTE..." ♪♫
I KNOW THAT ONE. LET'S SING IT TOGETHER...

MALIBU, CALIFORNIA, 1992.

ANNE, DARLING, COME HERE!

HERE I AM, JOHN!
MEET ERIK'S NEW LADY, BAMBI!

BAMBI, THIS IS THE EXQUISITE ANNE!
HI! ERIK'S TOLD ME LOTS ABOUT YOU...

YOU'RE FROM TEXAS, RIGHT?
I NEVER COULD GET RID OF THIS DUMB OL' ACCENT!

GREAT PARTY!
LET'S TALK ABOUT...
HA.HA!
MY LAWYER SAYS...
GREAT Q RATING...
CAN WE GO HOME SOON? I'M TIRED...
NOT YET HONEY. THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL PLANNED FOR LATER...

BUT EVERYONE'S LEAVING!
I TOLD YOU, IT'S FOR SPECIAL PEOPLE ONLY...
LET'S GO IN, IT'S ALMOST TIME!
?
WHY WON'T ANY-BODY TELL ME...?
OH, I GET IT!
WOW! MY FIRST HOLLY-WOOD ORGY!
ARE THE FAITHFUL PREPARED?

THEY AWAIT YOU, MASTER!
MAKE READY THE LAMB!
HEY! LEGGO OF ME! WHAT-TA YOU GUYS TRYIN' TO PULL? I DON'T DO BONDAGE!
SHUT UP, FLESH!
SLAP!
THOU WHO ABRUPTLY AS A KNIFE DID COME IN-TO MY LIFE TO MAKE MY SPIRIT THY SPACE...
I SUMMON THEE, O WORMFACE...

THY CALL IS ANSWERED.
WHERE IS THY GIFT?
NOOOOO!
"ALOUETTE, GENTILLE ALOUETTE..."

THE MAS DES PINEDES.
I KNOW YOU'RE RETIRED...
BUT I STILL NEED YOUR ADVICE, MEME...
THE BUSINESS AIN'T THE SAME THESE DAYS... FULL OF PUNKS THAT AIN'T GOT NO HONOR. EVEN NAZIS AGAIN...
YOU FOUGHT THOSE BASTARDS FIFTY YEARS AGO. WHAT'S THE WORLD COMIN' TO...
WE NEVER WENT AFTER ANYONE WHO WASN'T A PLAYER. TODAY, THERE'S ONLY CHAOS. WHY, MEME?
BECAUSE WE KNEW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL, FERNAND. WE DID WHAT WE HAD TO DO TO SURVIVE.
WE WENT TO CHURCH, TAUGHT OUR KIDS ABOUT MORALITY. NO ONE TOUCHED THE DRUGS.
BUT YOU DIDN'T COME TO LISTEN TO AN OLD MAN FART IN THE WIND.

IT'S ABOUT YOUR PICHOUNE. I KNOW YOU WORRY ABOUT HER.
THERE'S THIS GUY IN VEGAS WHO OWES ME ONE... SO, HE KEEPS AN EYE ON HER FOR ME...
...SHE'S MADE SOME BAD FRIENDS, MEME...
VERY BAD FRIENDS...
SO, WHAT SHOULD I DO? TELL THE VEGAS GUYS TO FIX THINGS?
NO!
THIS IS FAMILY BUSINESS. ONLY ONE OF THE FAMILY CAN FIX IT. I WILL GO...
ALONE?
ALONE.

SO I TOLD HIM--
DOING LUNCH IS SO EIGHTIES...
...PUTTING A CLIMBING WALL INTO THE OFFICE...
I REALLY THINK THE CONCEPT HAS LEGS...
I CAN'T GUARANTEE ANYTHING BEFORE THE RESEARCH COMES IN, BUT I LIKE IT!
WHO'S THIS CINDY JOHN'S TALKING TO?
THE NETWORK'S NEW GREAT WHITE HOPE... HA HA!
MAKE READY THE LAMB!
WHAT? NO!!!

YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME!
WHY NOT? YOU'VE PLAYED YOUR PART, NOW THE TIME'S COME FOR YOU TO LEAVE THE STAGE!
NOOO!!!
CINDY WILL BE MY NEW LEADING LADY!
TO THE MOST DREADED, THE MOST DEAR... THE ANGEL AND HIS DEATHLESS GRAIL...
WHO FILL MY LIFE WITH RADIANCE CLEAR, IN IMMORTALITY, ALL HAIL!
NO!

THY CALL IS ANSWERED.
WHERE IS THY GIFT?
YOUR LITTLE LAMB'S ALL READY. I'LL CARVE THE BITCH UP...
AIEE!
BAM!
BAM!
DO NOT TOUCH MY PETITE FILLE!
ANNIE, YOUR PAPI'S COME TO TAKE YOU HOME!

HOW DARE YOU INTERFERE WITH ME, OLD MAN?!
GREAT ONE, I COMMAND YOU TO MAKE THIS FOOL FEAR YOUR PRESENCE!
SPUT!
DO YOU THINK HE CARES? IMBECILES. TO HIM, YOU'RE PIGS. MEAT ANIMALS...
JUST LIKE THE NAZIS.
AND YOU'LL DIE LIKE THEM!
BAM!

I KNOW YOUR KIND. YOU DON'T FRIGHTEN ME!
INDEED. WHAT DO YOU WANT?
MY GRAND-DAUGHTER. SHE DOESN'T BELONG WITH YOU!
BUT SHE DOES. MY WORMS HAVE TASTED HER SOUL.
PAPI!
VERY WELL. ANYTHING ELSE?
ALLONS, MA PETITE, C'EST FINI!

I WANT THAT AS WELL!
GREAT ONE! I'VE SERVED YOU WELL! YOU CAN'T...
THUMP!

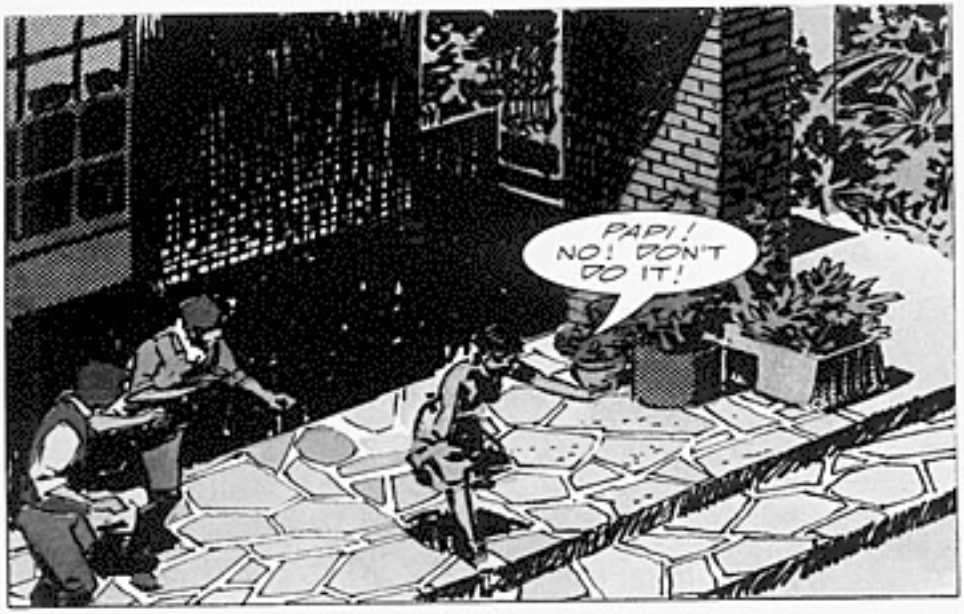
I CANNOT LEAVE WITHOUT MY GIFT.
THE GIRL IS YOURS, BUT YOU ARE MINE.
NOT THIS TIME...
BAM!
BAM!
BAM!
BAM!
BAM!
BAM!

VIENS, PICHOUNE! TIME TO GO HOME!
KLAUS'S BOX. WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT...
WHY DID YOU COME FOR ME? AFTER ALL THIS TIME...
THERE WAS NO OTHER CHOICE. YOU'RE FAMILY!
WHY DID YOU DO THESE TERRIBLE THINGS, ANNIE?
DIDN'T YOU UNDERSTAND THE COST TO YOUR IMMORTAL SOUL?

HOW CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THE COST? THE FIRST TIME I SAW YOU KILL A MAN, I WAS ONLY EIGHT...
AFTERWARDS, WE SANG... ALOUETTE...
MY PAUVRE PETITE. WHAT HAVE I DONE?
THE VIOLENCE INSIDE YOU HUNG OVER THE HOUSE LIKE A FOG...
...I COULDN'T BREATHE. I HAD TO ESCAPE...
JOHN WAS GOOD TO ME. HE TOOK CARE OF ME. HE WAS STRONG. HE REMINDED ME...
...OF YOU.
NON!
CE N'EST PAS VRAI! I'VE MADE ATONE-MENT. I'VE GIVEN TO THE CHURCH...
THE PRIEST HAS ABSOLVED ME. ISN'T THAT ENOUGH?

MARSEILLES.
NOOOOO!
NO! DON'T!
WHAT'S WRONG?
IT'S ALL RIGHT, SHE HAD A NIGHTMARE...
AGAIN?
PAPA!... SOB... I... I'M SORRY...
IT'S ALL RIGHT, PICHOUNETTE. GO BACK TO SLEEP. DOCTOR ARMAND WILL BE BACK TOMORROW...
BUT MAYBE, IT IS I, NOT HE, WHO MUST FIND YOUR CURE...

COME OUT OF THERE! I WANT TO TALK TO YOU!
WHAT WILL IT COST TO FREE MY PETITE OF HER NIGHT-MARES?
YOU ALREADY KNOW THE PRICE.
YOU WANT REVENGE BECAUSE I SHOT YOU!
ON THE CONTRARY, THAT MERELY MAKES YOU...
...A MORE DESIRABLE MORSEL!
BON. I UNDERSTAND. YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A DEAL...
MAYBE AN ABSO-LUTION FROM HELL WILL SUCCEED WHERE THE CHURCH'S FAILED...
I AM YOURS, CENOBITE!
YOU ALWAYS WERE.


PAPI! NO! DON'T DO IT!

KEEP HER OUT OF HERE!

PESOLE, MADEMOISELLE, LES ORDRES DU PATRON!
NO! NO!

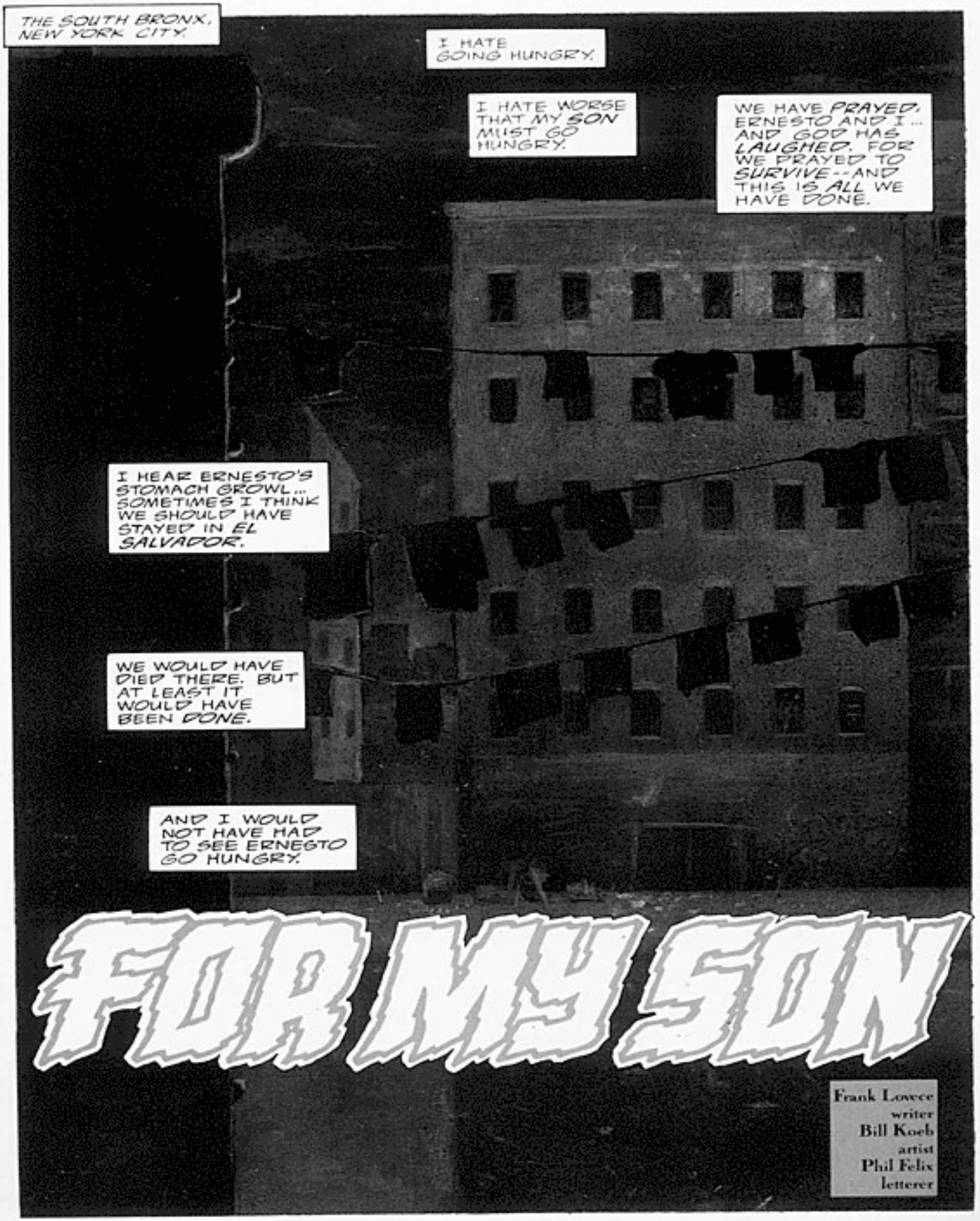
I ALWAYS WAS THE SOURCE OF HER PAIN. WHEN A BRANCH IS ROTTEN, IT MUST BE CUT. SHE'LL BE FREE NOW, WON'T SHE?
PERHAPS. BUT FOR YOU, NOTHING EXISTS BUT A GULF OF FATHOMLESS DESPAIR...

YOU SHALL LET LEVIATHAN'S GLORY SET YOUR HEART AFIRE. YOU SHALL LEARN THE TRUE DELIGHT THAT CANNOT ROT.
YOU SHALL OBEY.

I WILL NOT.

THEY'RE GONE...
OH, PAPI...
JE NE COMPRENDS PAS...
LE PATRON ? OU EST IL ?
I FORGIVE YOU, PAPI...
"WHY ARE YOU HIDING FROM YOUR PAPI ? SHOULD WE PLAY CACHE-CACHE ?
"COME ON THE TERRACE. WE'LL WATCH THE SUNSET TOGETHER...
"WHAT WERE YOU SINGING JUST NOW ? ALOUETTE ?
"I KNOW THAT ONE. LET'S SING IT TOGETHER..."
♪ ALOUETTE, GENTILLE ALOUETTE... ♪

SEE WHAT I MADE?
IT'S... IT'S LOVELY, SWEETIE ...SUCH A NICE CAT'S CRADLE...
S'NOT A CAT'S CRADLE, SILLY--IT'S A SPIDER'S WEB!
Oh. I SEE.
LOOK, ANNE, I WANT YOU TO GIVE THIS NOTE TO YOUR MOMMY AND DADDY... BETWEEN YOUR STORIES AND, UH, ASSOCIATIONS, I REALLY THINK WE NEED TO SCEDULE A PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE!
WHO ELSE IS WILLING TO SHARE WITH THE CLASS? MAYBE ABOUT SISTER'S HAIR?
ME! ME!
ON OUR VACATION WE WENT--
--'CAUSE MY SUMMER WAS--
WHY DON'T WE TRY SOMEONE A LITTLE LESS EAGER THIS TIME, Hmm?
MAYBE THEN TEACHER CAN KEEP HER LUNCH DOWN, Hmm?
ERNESTO? I SEE FROM SISTER'S SEATING CHART THAT YOU'VE JUST RECENTLY MOVED HERE FROM CENTRAL AMERICA.
I'M SURE THE OTHER LITTLE BOYS AND GIRLS WOULD LOVE TO HEAR WHAT A SUMMER'S LIKE WHERE YOU COME FROM!
YES, TEACHER!
FIRST YOU MUST KNOW, WHERE I COME FROM, IT IS VERY WARM...
...VERY VERY WARM...

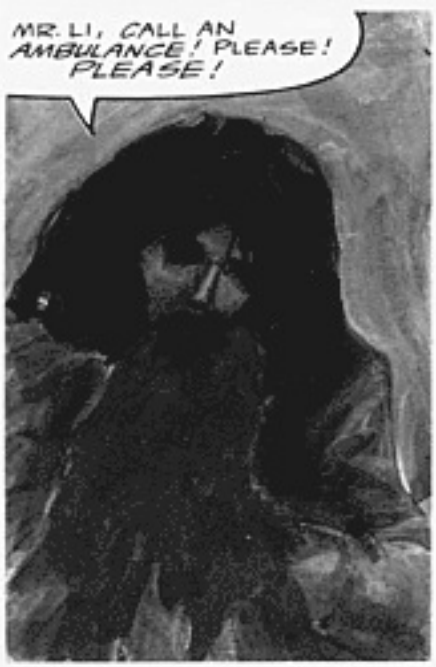

THE SOUTH BRONX, NEW YORK CITY.
I HATE GOING HUNGRY.
I HATE WORSE THAT MY SON MUST GO HUNGRY.
WE HAVE PRAYED, ERNESTO AND I... AND GOD HAS LAUGHED. FOR WE PRAYED TO SURVIVE--AND THIS IS ALL WE HAVE DONE.
I HEAR ERNESTO'S STOMACH GROWL... SOMETIMES I THINK WE SHOULD HAVE STAYED IN EL SALVADOR.
WE WOULD HAVE DIED THERE. BUT AT LEAST IT WOULD HAVE BEEN DONE.
AND I WOULD NOT HAVE HAD TO SEE ERNESTO GO HUNGRY.
FOR MY SON
Frank Lovece
writer
Bill Koeb
artist
Phil Felix
letterer

< ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, ERNESTO? >
SÍ, PAPA.
< YOU KNOW, ERNESTO, IF WE GO TO SLEEP NOW, WE WON'T FEEL HUNGRY.
< AND TOMORROW MORNING, THEY'LL HAVE BREAKFAST FOR YOU AT SCHOOL. >
SÍ, PAPA.
BUENO. < SAY YOUR PRAYERS NOW, ERNESTO. SAY HELLO TO YOUR MAMA IN HEAVEN. >
< I WILL, PAPA. ARE YOU HUNGRY TOO, PAPA? >
< NOOOO... NO, I'M FINE.
< GO TO SLEEP NOW, ERNESTO. I LOVE YOU. YOU DON'T HAVE TO CRY. >
N-NO, PAPA. BUENOS NOCHES. GOOD-NIGHT.
GOOD-NIGHT.

ANOTHER MORNING AT THE MACHINE.
ERNESTO IS IN SCHOOL.
I AM IN WHAT AMERICANS CALL A "SHOP OF SWEAT."
WHIRRRRRRRR
THESE MACHINES--THEY ARE EVEN OLDER THAN THE ONE IN MY SHOP, IN EL SALVADOR.
TWO YEARS IT HAS BEEN, SINCE EL PRESIDENTE'S MEN MURDERED SIX JESUIT PRIESTS... AND THEIR HOUSEKEEPER ... AND HER CHILD.
THEN HIS SOLDIERS WENT INTO THE COUNTRYSIDE -- KILLING THOSE OF US WHO SPOKE AGAINST THE DICTATOR.
ERNESTO AND I PRAYED TO GOD AND ESCAPED... TO THIS PUTA COUNTRY WHERE THEY WOULD SEND US BACK TO OUR DEATHS.
WHIRRR
WHEN YOU FLEE A LEFTIST, THEY WELCOME YOU AND CALL YOU A "POLITICAL REFUGEE." FLEE A RIGHT-WING DICTATOR, YOU'RE NOTHING -- AN "ECONOMIC" REFUGEE.
I WOULD LAUGH IF I WERE NOT SO HUNGRY.
BUT AT LEAST ERNESTO IS SAFE -- WHAT?
YEEEEAAAAAA
AAAAAAAAAAAAA
WHIRRRR-
IRRRRR
OH MY GOD! HELP ME!!
<WRAP IT UP! QUICKLY! SOMEONE CALL A DOCTOR!>

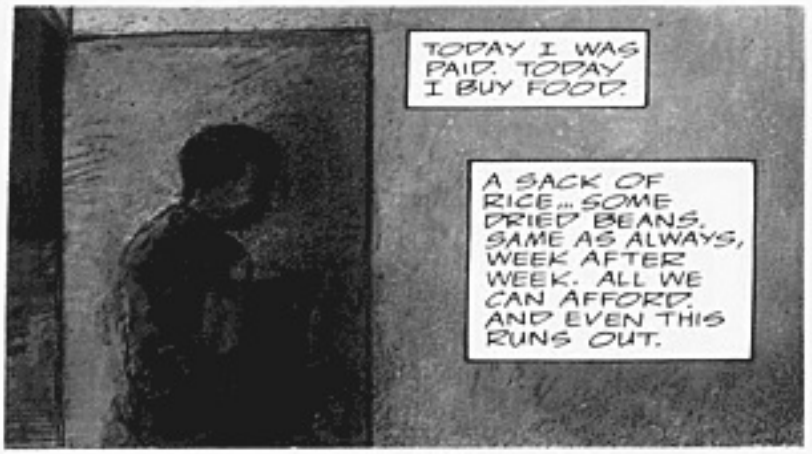
HEY! WHAT'S THE PROBLEM HERE?
GET BACK TO WORK! ALL OF YOU! GO ON!
OHMIGOD
IS THAT LIANNA?
HAPPENED?
OH GAWD OH GAWWWWWWD!
MR. LI, HER HAND...
CALL 911
MR. LI, SHE'S IN SHOCK...

YOU! WHAT ARE YOU WRAPPING HER HAND IN? IS THAT MY FABRIC?
OH, GOD! OH, GOD! MY HAND!
SEÑOR LI, CALL AMBULANCE, SHE BLEEDING...
SO'S MY HEART! EVERYBODY BACK TO WORK! NOW!
AHHH... AHHHHHH!


MR. LI, CALL AN AMBULANCE! PLEASE! PLEASE!

QUIET!
NEPHEW! WRAP A RAG AROUND HER HAND AND GET HER OUT OF HERE!
AND TELL HER IF SHE SAYS A GODDAMN WORD ABOUT US I'LL CALL IMMIGRATION ON HER AND HER WHOLE GODDAMN FAMILY, I SWEAR!
JEEZ! WHY DOES THIS ALWAYS HAPPEN TO ME?
AND YOU! YOU'RE SO DAMNED CONCERNED! I'M TAKING THE COST OF THE FABRIC OUT OF YOUR PAY! NOW GET BACK TO WORK--OR I'LL CALL IMMIGRATION ON YOU. ALL OF YOU!

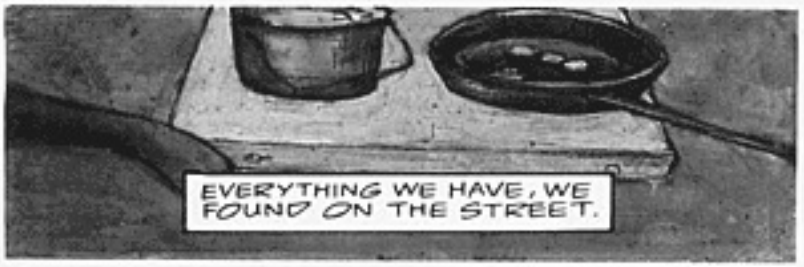
I DO AS HE SAYS. I CANNOT HAVE HIM CALL LA MIGRA ON ME.
NINE HOURS A DAY, TWO DOLLARS AN HOUR.
AFTER RENT AND ELECTRICITY, ERNESTO AND I HAVE PENNIES LEFT FOR CLOTHING AND FOOD.
IT COSTS ME AN HOUR JUST TO PAY FOR TWO SUBWAY TOKENS. I CANNOT SLIP THROUGH WITHOUT PAYING, AS I SEE SO MANY OTHERS DO.
FOR ERNESTO'S SAKE, I CANNOT RISK LA POLICIA FOR ANYTHING.
I'M SO HUNGRY... DIOS MIO, I HATE BEING SO HUNGRY. THE WELFARE PEOPLE... WOULD TURN US IN TO LA MIGRA.
TWO YEARS... TWO YEARS. IN THE SUMMER, WITHOUT ERNESTO'S SCHOOL, IT IS SO HARD TO KEEP HIM FED.
I TRIED BEGGING ONCE...
PEOPLE LOOKED AT ME WITH SPIT IN THEIR EYES. LIKE I WERE GARBAGE.
AND ERNESTO... THE LOOK ON HIS FACE... THAT NIGHT I CRIED HARDER THAN WHEN HIS MOTHER DIED.
I CANNOT BEG AGAIN. I WOULD RATHER SELL MY SOUL TO THE DEVIL.


TODAY I WAS PAID. TODAY I BUY FOOD.
A SACK OF RICE... SOME DRIED BEANS. SAME AS ALWAYS, WEEK AFTER WEEK. ALL WE CAN AFFORD. AND EVEN THIS RUNS OUT.

¡PAPA! GOOD EVENING!
SI?
¡GOOD EVENING, ERNESTO. I HAVE A SURPRISE TONIGHT.

¡I SAVED AND BOUGHT PLANTAINS! FRESH ONES! AND MILK! THE BEANS NEED TO SOAK OVERNIGHT SO-- TONIGHT WE'LL HAVE A TREAT!
PAPA! PAPA!

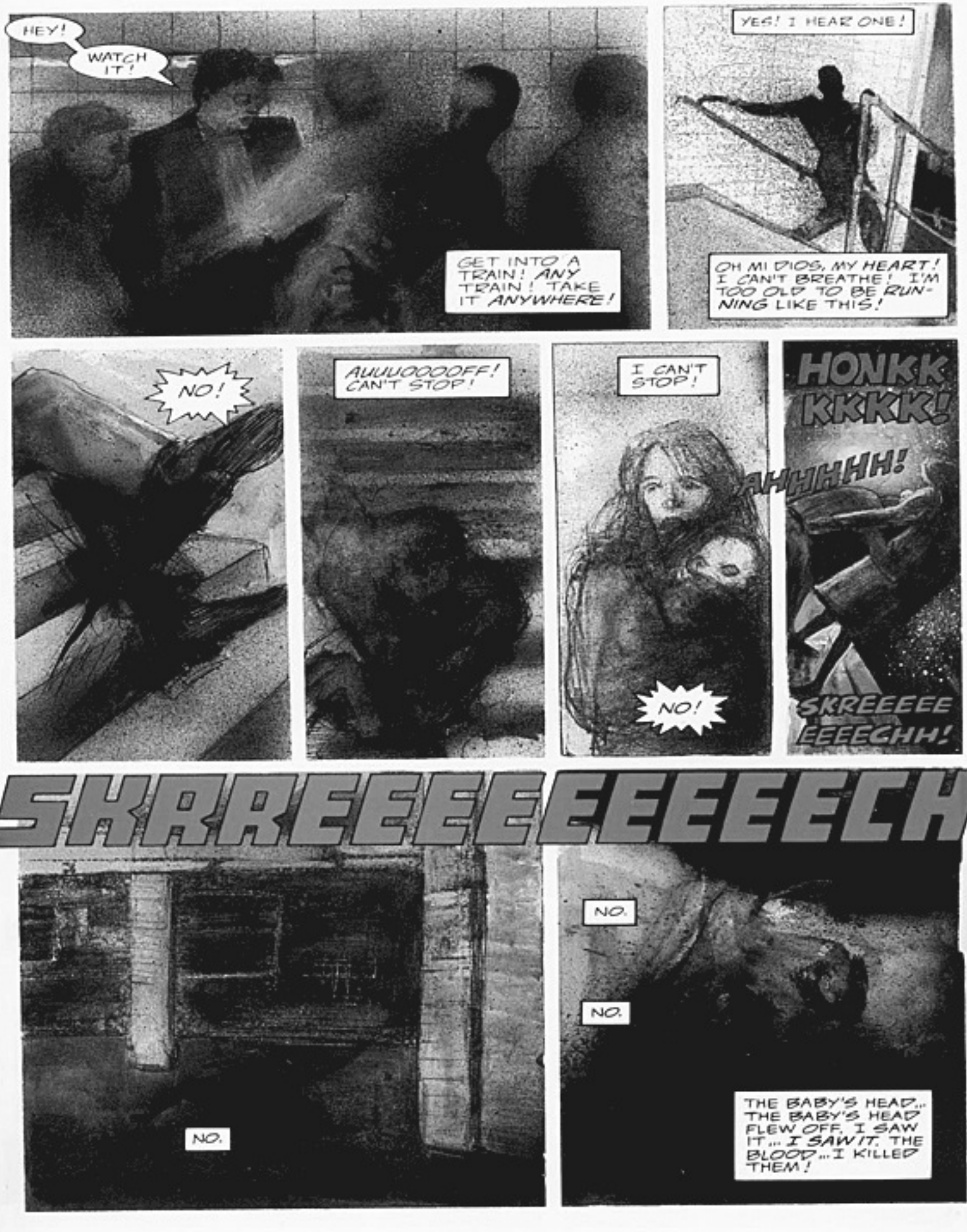
I POUR ICE INTO THE BUCKET THAT SERVES AS OUR REFRIGERATOR.
ERNESTO SPREADS THE GROCERY BAG ON THE FLOOR, SO I'LL HAVE A CLEAN SURFACE TO CUT THE PLANTAINS.
WE HAVE NO TABLE.
WE HAVE NO OVEN.


EVERYTHING WE HAVE, WE FOUND ON THE STREET.

BUT TONIGHT, THE PLANTAINS ARE GOOD, AND MY DINNER COMPANION IS WONDERFUL.

THE AIR FEELS NEW AND FRESH THIS MORNING AS I WALK FROM THE SUBWAY TO WORK. THINGS SEEM CLEARER TODAY. EVEN THE LORD JESUS KNEW THAT PEOPLE THINK BETTER WHEN THEY ARE FED.
FROM THE GARBAGE, I FISH OUT FIVE DEPOSIT BOTTLES ...ENOUGH FOR A PHONE CALL.
I HAD SEEN AN ADVERTISEMENT IN THE SUBWAY -- "PROJECT REFUGEE." I WILL CALL THEM -- ASK FOR HELP.
AND I PRAY TO LORD JESUS THAT THIS IS NOT LA MIGRA IN DISGUISE.
GOOD MORNING. RIVERVIEW CHURCH. PROJECT REFUGEE.
OLA, SENORA. ¿ HABLA ESPANOL ?
¿ SI ?
ON A MATCHBOOK, I WRITE DOWN THEIR ADDRESS.
THROUGH MY NERVOUSNESS, I ASK WHAT THEY CAN DO TO HELP MY SON.
WITH A START, I SUDDENLY REALIZE IT HAS BEEN WEEKS SINCE I'VE SPOKEN SPANISH WITH ANYONE BUT ERNESTO.
AND THEN I LOOK UP AND REALIZE SOMETHING ELSE.
THAT SOMETHING IS TERRIBLY WRONG.

WHY'RE YOU BUSTING MY CHOPS? YOU GOT NO RIGHT! I'M JUST A SHOPKEEPER. WHY DON'T YOU GO AFTER SOME DRUG DEALERS, SOME WALL STREET CROOKS?!
OHHHHH, YOU SPEAK ENGLISH NOW THAT WE'VE GOTTEN A TRANSLATOR. CUTE.
NOW UNLOCK THAT DOOR--NOW--AND LET THESE IMMIGRATION PEOPLE UP... OR IN FIVE MINUTES WE GET A BATTERING RAM.
AND LEMME TELL YOU SOME THIN', PAL: IF YOU GOT ILLEGALS IN A SWEAT SHOP UP THERE, YOUR WON TONS ARE IN SERIOUS SOUP!
¡DIOS MIO! ¡LA MIGRA!
MR. LI! WHAT'S HE SAYING?
YOU WANT ILLEGALS, MAN?!
THERE! THERE'S ONE NOW! GET HIM!
OH MY GOD! NO! THEY CAN'T! THEY CAN'T SEND US BACK!
THEY'LL KILL US IN EL SALVADOR! THEY'LL KILL ERNESTO!
HEY! FAREBEATER! STOP!
GO GO GO GO GO GO! RUN INTO THE SUBWAY MAZE! THERE IS NO OTHER HOPE!


HEY!
WATCH IT!
GET INTO A TRAIN! ANY TRAIN! TAKE IT ANYWHERE!
YES! I HEAR ONE!
OH MI DIOS, MY HEART! I CAN'T BREATHE! I'M TOO OLD TO BE RUNNING LIKE THIS!
NO!
AUUUUOOOOFF! CAN'T STOP!
I CAN'T STOP!
NO!
HONKK KKKK!
AHHHHHH!
SKREEEEE EEEECHH!
SKRREEEEEEEEECH
NO.
NO.
NO.
THE BABY'S HEAD... THE BABY'S HEAD FLEW OFF. I SAW IT... I SAW IT. THE BLOOD... I KILLED THEM!

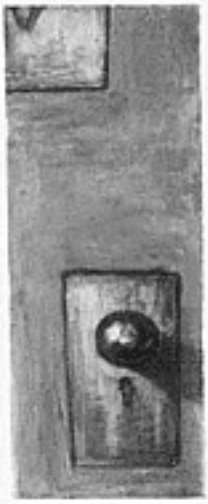
WHAT HAVE I DONE? I WANT TO DIE. I WANT TO VOMIT.
I CAN'T DIE. I CAN'T GIVE UP. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ERNESTO?
MY HEAD... I'M BLEEDING...
MONEY FOR FOOD PLEASE
PEOPLE LOOKING AT ME... OH, DIOS, I KNOW THAT LOOK...
THEY ARE CALLING THE POLICE. I HAVE TO RUN. I HAVE TO RUN.
THE TRACKS... THE THIRD RAIL... HIGH VOLTAGE -- COULD KILL ME.
BUT THERE IS WOOD ATOP IT. I CAN RUN THIS WAY.
I JUST CANNOT FALL!
I'LL BE SAFE. THE TRAIN JUST CAME. THERE WON'T BE ANOTHER RIGHT AWAY...
OH MI DIOS.
OH MI DIOS.
¡MI DIOS!

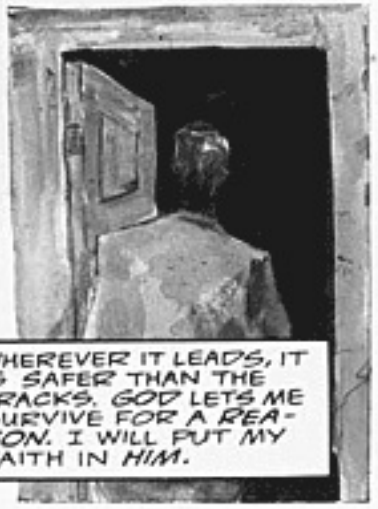
OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN HALLOWED BE THY NAME THY KINGDOM COME THY WILL BE DONE

WHOOOOOSSSHHHHHH

THRUMMM-THRUMMM-THRUMMMMMM

THE BLOOD HAS DRAINED FROM MY FACE. MY LEGS ARE TREMBLING. I AM IN SHOCK. I AM ABOUT TO COLLAPSE.
GOD HAS SAVED ME. IT CAN ONLY BE FOR MY SON -- FOR I AM NOW GUILTY OF MORTAL SIN.

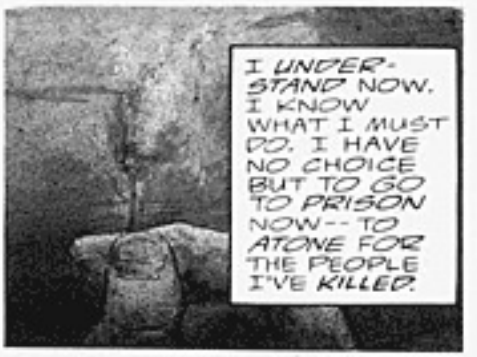




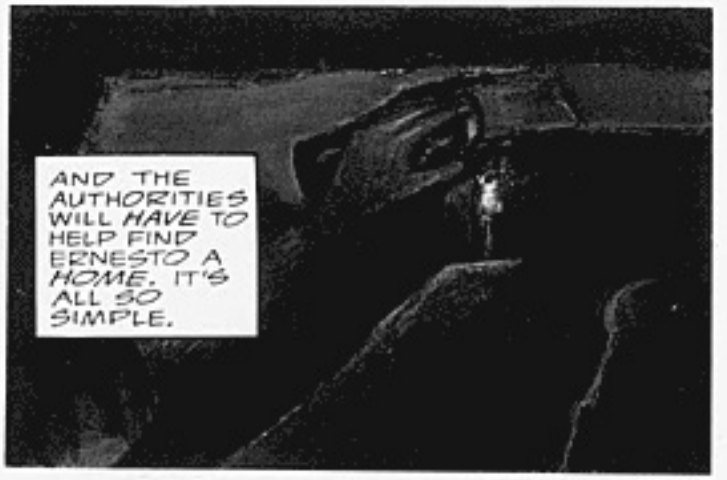
BLACK AS THE GRAVE. I SUPPOSE THIS IS AN OLD TOOL SHED -- I HEAR NO MACHINES.
I CAN WAIT HERE UNTIL THE EARLY MORNING... FEW TRAINS RUN THEN. THE TRACKS WILL BE SAFER.
BUT... ALL THOSE HOURS WITHOUT FOOD? WATER? AND MY HEAD IS BLEEDING... I COULD DIE HERE AND ERNESTO WILL BE ALONE!
THERE MUST BE ANOTHER PATH TO THE SURFACE -- TO ANOTHER STATION AT LEAST.

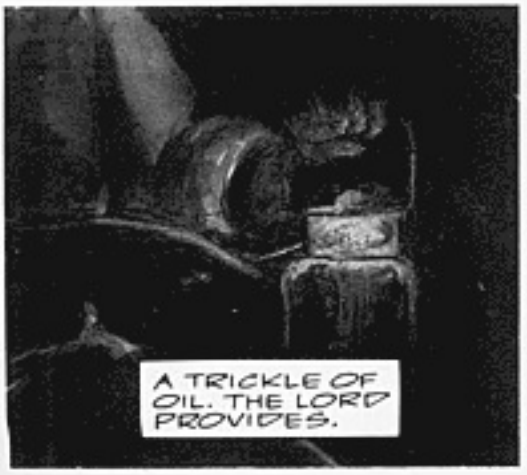
FOR ERNESTO'S SAKE...

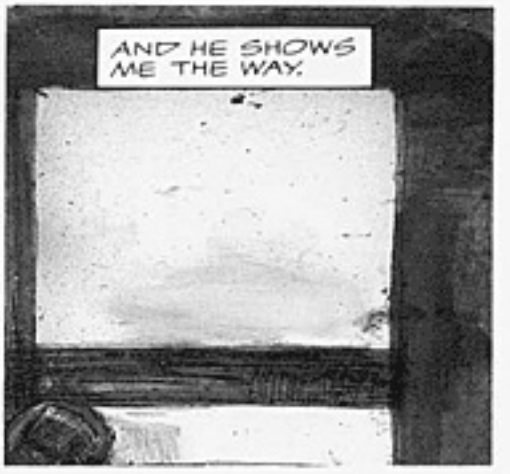
...I WILL FIND A WAY OUT OF HERE -- EVEN IF I MUST WALK THROUGH HELL ITSELF.
HMMM...
YES...

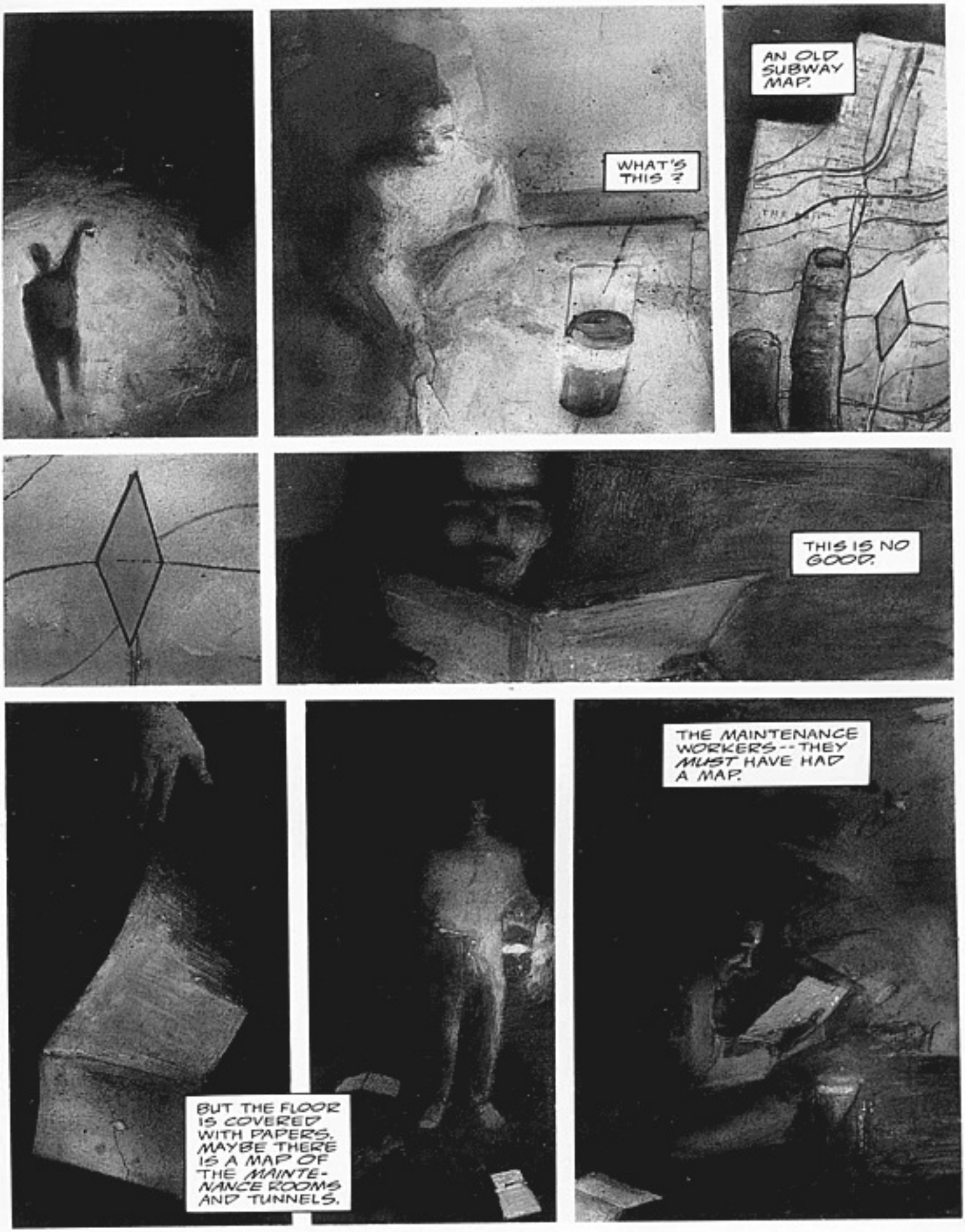

I UNDERSTAND NOW. I KNOW WHAT I MUST DO. I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO GO TO PRISON NOW -- TO ATONE FOR THE PEOPLE I'VE KILLED.

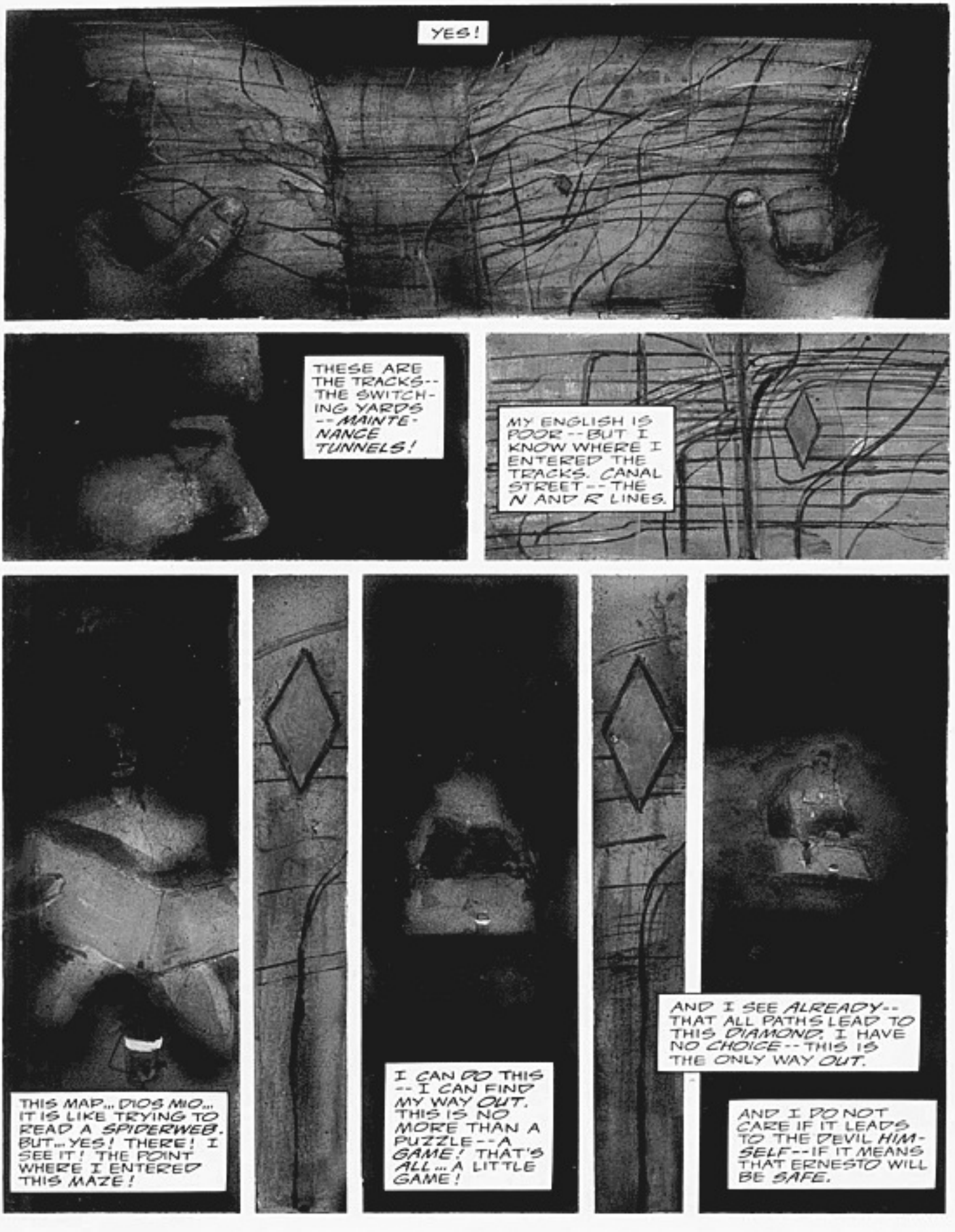
BUT AT LEAST THAT MEANS... I WILL NOT BE SENT BACK. AND SO, NEITHER WILL ERNESTO.
I WILL FIND MY WAY OUT... TURN MYSELF IN...

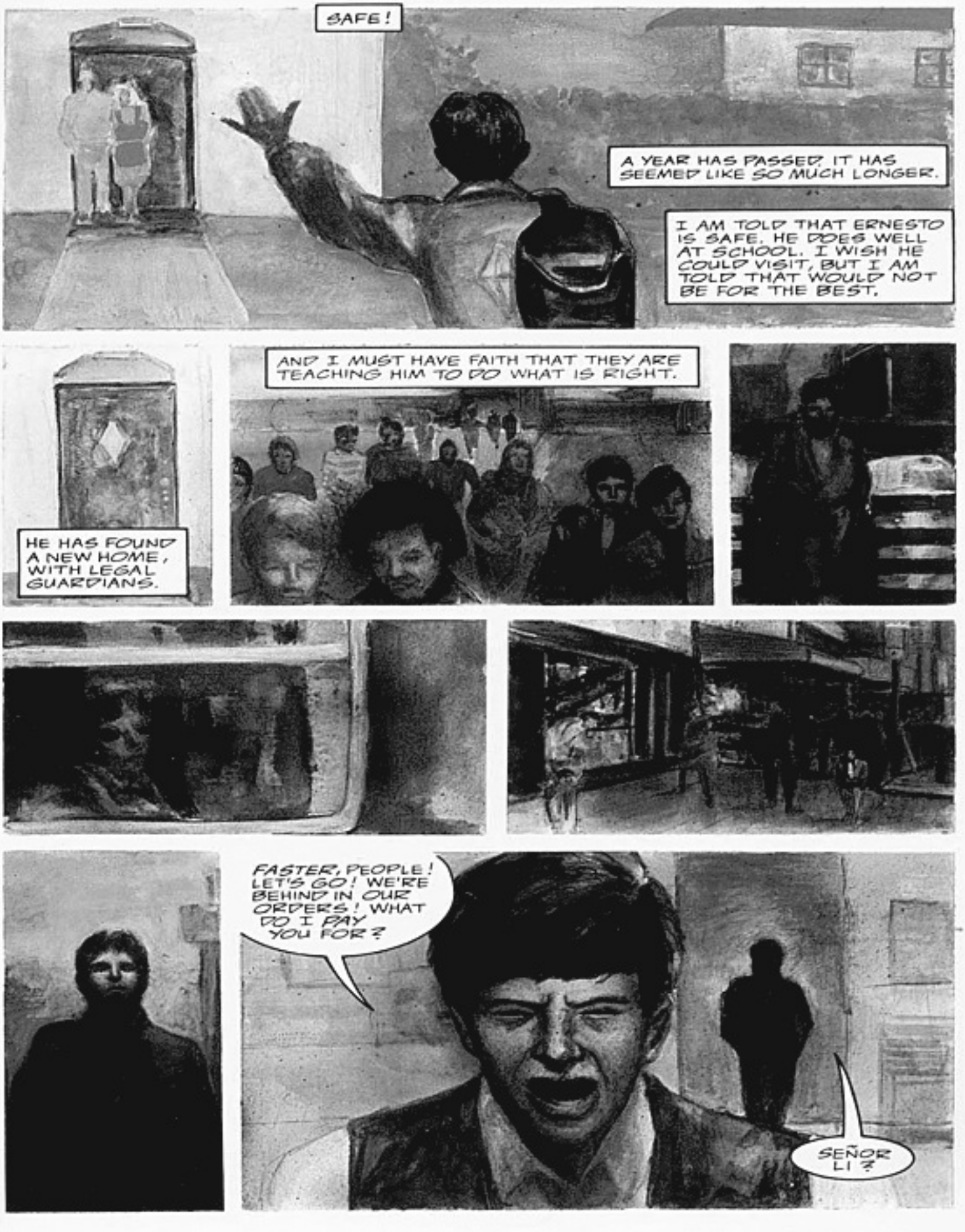

AND THE AUTHORITIES WILL HAVE TO HELP FIND ERNESTO A HOME. IT'S ALL SO SIMPLE.


A TRICKLE OF OIL. THE LORD PROVIDES.


AND HE SHOWS ME THE WAY.


WHAT'S THIS ?
AN OLD SUBWAY MAP.
THIS IS NO GOOD.
BUT THE FLOOR IS COVERED WITH PAPERS. MAYBE THERE IS A MAP OF THE MAINTE-NANCE ROOMS AND TUNNELS.
THE MAINTENANCE WORKERS -- THEY MUST HAVE HAD A MAP.


YES!
THESE ARE THE TRACKS-- THE SWITCHING YARDS --*MAINTENANCE TUNNELS!*
MY ENGLISH IS POOR--BUT I KNOW WHERE I ENTERED THE TRACKS. CANAL STREET--THE *N* AND *R* LINES.
THIS MAP... DIOS MIO... IT IS LIKE TRYING TO READ A *SPIDERWEB*. BUT... YES! THERE! I SEE IT! THE POINT WHERE I ENTERED THIS MAZE!
I CAN *DO* THIS --I CAN FIND MY WAY *OUT*. THIS IS NO MORE THAN A PUZZLE--A *GAME*! THAT'S *ALL*... A LITTLE GAME!
AND I SEE *ALREADY*-- THAT ALL PATHS LEAD TO THIS *DIAMOND*. I HAVE NO *CHOICE*--THIS IS THE ONLY WAY *OUT*.
AND I DO NOT CARE IF IT LEADS TO THE DEVIL *HIMSELF*--IF IT MEANS THAT ERNESTO WILL BE *SAFE*.


SAFE!
A YEAR HAS PASSED. IT HAS SEEMED LIKE SO MUCH LONGER.
I AM TOLD THAT ERNESTO IS SAFE. HE DOES WELL AT SCHOOL. I WISH HE COULD VISIT, BUT I AM TOLD THAT WOULD NOT BE FOR THE BEST.
HE HAS FOUND A NEW HOME, WITH LEGAL GUARDIANS.
AND I MUST HAVE FAITH THAT THEY ARE TEACHING HIM TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT.
FASTER, PEOPLE! LET'S GO! WE'RE BEHIND IN OUR ORDERS! WHAT DO I PAY YOU FOR?
SEÑOR LI?

WHAT? WHO LET THIS KID IN HERE?! WHOSE KID IS THIS? GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE--NOW!
SEÑOR LI, I AM A CUSTOMER.

I REPRESENT A FAMILY FROM COLOMBIA. WE ARE INVOLVED IN... IMPORT AND EXPORT.
I HAVE BEEN SENT TO TELL YOU MY FAMILY NEEDS SEVERAL... SPECIALLY LINED JACKETS TO BE MADE.

HMMM.
YOU GOT MONEY? ON YOU?
YES, SEÑOR.
.WELL? WHAT'RE YOU WAITING FOR? LET'S SEE IT.

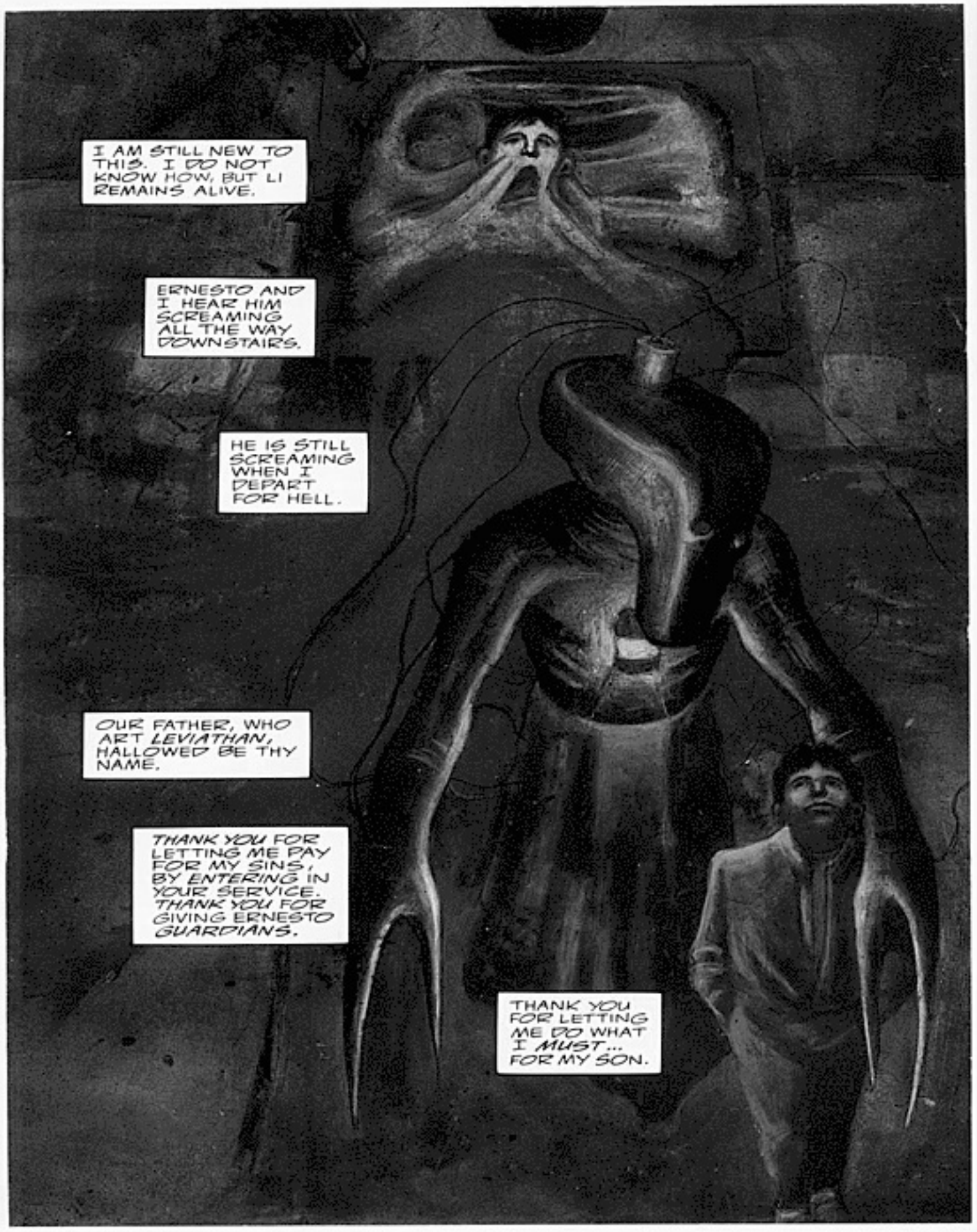
HMM... I CAN DO THE JACKETS AND THE LINING, NO PROBLEM. YOU WANT THIS PATTERN ON THE BACK?
YES, SEÑOR. THE PATTERN IS MOST IMPORTANT.

IT MUST BE CONTINUOUS, SO THAT WE CAN THREAD TUBING INSIDE. AND THIS PARTICULAR PATTERN, SEÑOR--YOU COULD SAY IT IS OUR FAMILY CREST.
LOOKS LIKE A PAIN IN THE ASS. A CONTINUOUS LINE?
YOU GOT A PAPER PATTERN I CAN WORK FROM?

NO, SEÑOR, THAT IS YOUR JOB. MY FAMILY PAYS EXTREMELY WELL FOR QUALITY WORK... AND QUIET WORK.
GOTCHA.

YOU CAN DO IT RIGHT AWAY--IMMEDIATELY?
NO PROBLEM! I'LL HAVE A SAMPLE FOR YOU TOMORROW.
THANK YOU, SEÑOR. SOMEONE FROM MY FAMILY... WILL BE IN TOUCH.

CHRIST, LOOK AT THE TIME-- PAST MIDNIGHT.
DAMN THEM COKEHEAD COLOMBIANS. HOW THE HELL THEY EXPECT ANYONE TO FIGURE OUT THIS STUPID DESIGN?
WELL--THEY CAME TO THE RIGHT PLACE. ALMOST GOT THIS SUCKER LICKED.
OKAY, NOW. SLIP THIS PIECE THROUGH HERE, BRING IT BACK AROUND, KEEP THE TUBE FROM KINKING OVER HERE...
I GOT IT!
YES! DAMN, I'M GOOD! I'M GONNA MAKE SOME BUCKS ON THIS.
AND Y'KNOW ...NOW I'M THINKING... SUPPOSE I GIVE A TIP TO THE D.A.-- SOME INFORMATION I CAN OFFER TO TRADE HIM BEFORE MY TRIAL COMES UP...
SURE! WHY WOULD THEY WANT ME WHEN THEY CAN HAVE SOME COLOMBIAN DRUG RUNNERS? NOBODY REALLY GIVES A SHIT ABOUT SWEAT SHOPS ANYWAY.
JEEZ, WHAT A NIGHT. WHAT--?
WHAT'S THAT-- FLASHLIGHT?
SOME GODDAMN THIEF IN MY FACTORY! MAYBE SOME INSPECTOR!
DROP IT, PAL! OR I BLOW YER DAMN FACE OFF!
YOUR FACE--YOUR FACE...!


I AM STILL NEW TO THIS. I DO NOT KNOW HOW, BUT LI REMAINS ALIVE.
ERNESTO AND I HEAR HIM SCREAMING ALL THE WAY DOWNSTAIRS.
HE IS STILL SCREAMING WHEN I DEPART FOR HELL.
OUR FATHER, WHO ART *LEVIATHAN*, HALLOWED BE THY NAME.
THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME PAY FOR MY SINS, BY *ENTERING* IN YOUR SERVICE. *THANK YOU* FOR GIVING ERNESTO *GUARDIANS*.
THANK YOU FOR LETTING ME DO WHAT I *MUST*... FOR MY SON.

OF SUCH SUMMERS, MY PAPA WOULD SAY," ERNESTO, THIS SEASON IS GOING TO BE AS HOT AS--"

THAT'S QUITE ALRIGHT, I CAN GUESS THE PLACE YOUR FATHER WOULD USE AS A COMPRISON!
THIS, WHAT IS THIS?

WHAT KIND OF JIGSAW-- YOU SHOULDN'T BE LOOKING AT THIS SORT OF THING AT YOUR AGE! AT ANY AGE!

ENOUGH OF THAT-- AND THESE SICK GAMES YOU CHILDREN ARE PLAYING!

WORST OF ALL, WE'RE NO CLOSER TO KNOWING WHAT HAPPENED TO SISTER'S HAIR!
MAYBE YOU'D RATHER FATHER PARADY CAME BACK AND IN AND SET YOU ALL STRAIGHT!

OH, DON'T MISSUS NEILL, PLEASE! DON'T BE MEAN TO US!
NOT LIKE THAT OTHER TEACHER!

OH, I'M SORRY, HONEY ... IT'S TINA, ISN'T IT? I SCARED YOU, DIDN'T I?

UH-huh, SCARED ME. AND SISTER MARY FRANCIS TAUGHT US...
...DO UNTO OTHERS...

OLD WIVES' TALE
IT'S RECESS AT P.S. 147 IN NEW YORK CITY. A TIME FOR CHILDREN TO INDULGE IN THOSE SILLY GAMES THAT THEY PLAY! KICKBALL, DODGE-BALL, DUCK, DUCK, GOOSE...
STEP ON A CRACK AND YOU'LL BREAK YOUR MOTHER'S BACK...
Barry Dutter writer
Steven Johnson artist
Phil Felix letterer
TINA CARRUTHERS' FAVORITE GAME IS HOPSCOTCH, BUT AFTER TODAY, SHE'LL NEVER PLAY IT AGAIN.
STEP ON A CRACK AND YOU'LL BREAK YOUR MOTHER'S BACK... STEP...
TINA LIVES WITH HER PARENTS IN A NICE APARTMENT IN THE CITY. MRS. CARRUTHERS SPENDS HER DAYS CLEANING, DOING LAUNDRY, AND WATCHING SOAP OPERAS.
HER ONLY COMPLAINT IS HAVING TO TRUDGE UP AND DOWN THE STAIRS ALL DAY LONG.
...ON A CRACK...
"...AND BREAK YOUR MOTHER'S BACK!"
THE DOCTORS SAID MRS. CARRUTHERS WOULD NEVER WALK AGAIN. ONLY TINA KNEW THE REAL REASON WHY.

AFTER HER MOTHER'S ACCIDENT, TINA STOPPED PLAYING WITH THE OTHER KIDS.

INSTEAD, SHE SPENT HER RECESS FIDDLING WITH A STRANGE PUZZLE.

TINA DIDN'T TALK TO ANYONE. SHE WOULDN'T EVEN EAT LUNCH. ALL SHE WANTED TO DO WAS PLAY WITH HER BOX.

TINA'S DARK MOOD CAUGHT THE EYE OF HER TEACHER, EVELYN WONG.

TINA'S WITHDRAWING INTO HER OWN LITTLE WORLD! THAT'S GOT TO STOP.

HI, TINA. HOW COME YOU'RE NOT PLAYING WITH THE OTHER KIDS?

I DON'T FEEL LIKE PLAYING.

TINA, I KNOW YOU'VE BEEN VERY SAD SINCE YOUR MOTHER'S ACCIDENT, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING YOU MUST UNDERSTAND!

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR MOTHER WAS NOT YOUR FAULT. YOU HAVE TO STOP BLAMING YOURSELF.

YOU'RE WRONG, MISS WONG. IT WAS MY FAULT!

I STEPPED ON A CRACK, AND I BROKE HER BACK!

TINA, THAT'S JUST A SILLY RHYME! THAT'S NOT REAL!

LISTEN TO ME. WHEN I WAS A LITTLE GIRL, I USED TO BELIEVE THERE WERE MONSTERS UNDER MY BED! THEN I GREW UP AND REALIZED IT WAS JUST MY IMAGINATION.

LOTS OF TIMES WE BELIEVE THINGS WHEN WE'RE YOUNG, BUT THEN WE FIND OUT THE TRUTH WHEN WE GROW UP. DON'T GO ON BLAMING YOURSELF FOR SOMETHING YOU HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH.

NOW, WHY DON'T YOU GIVE ME THAT BOX, AND GO OFF AND PLAY WITH YOUR FRIENDS?

DO YOU PROMISE TO TAKE CARE OF IT?

OF COURSE I DO. I'LL GIVE IT BACK WHEN I FEEL YOU'RE READY FOR IT.

NOW, RUN ALONG AND PLAY.

MAKE SURE YOU TAKE CARE OF IT, MISS WONG! I NEED IT BACK!

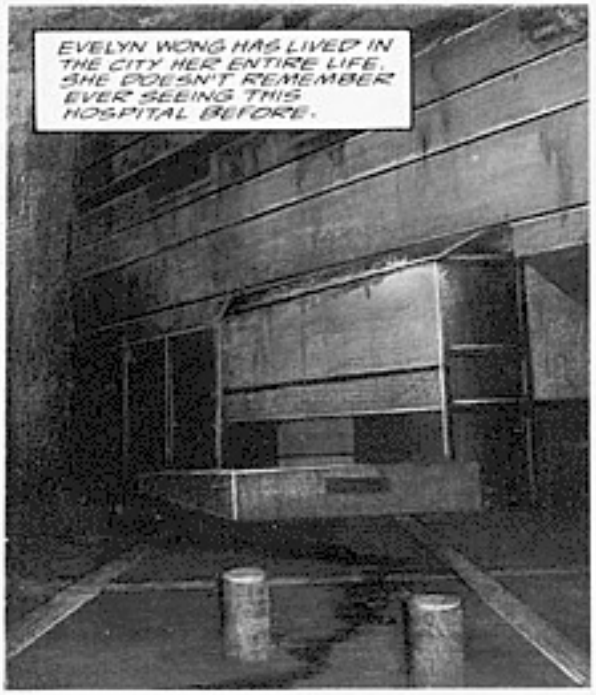
I WILL! RUN ALONG NOW!

EVELYN USUALLY STAYS A FEW HOURS LATE AFTER SCHOOL EVERY NIGHT, GRADING PAPERS, AND MAKING OUT THE NEXT DAY'S LESSON PLAN.
SHE FINDS SHE ENJOYS THE QUIET OF THE EMPTY CLASSROOM; IT'S A REFRESHING CHANGE FROM THE DAYTIME CLAMOR.
TONIGHT, HOWEVER, SHE IS DUE TO RECEIVE A MOST UNWELCOME GUEST.
EVELYN WONG!
STOP TEACHING LIES TO YOUR STUDENTS!
WHO ARE YOU? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
IT MATTERS NOT WHO I AM, ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT YOU STOP THE LIES!
I HEARD WHAT YOU TOLD THAT LITTLE GIRL TODAY--ABOUT THE MONSTERS UNDER YOUR BED? WELL, LET ME TELL YOU, THOSE MONSTERS WERE REAL!
LISTEN, LADY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU...
THE MONSTER THAT USED TO LIVE UNDER YOUR BED--YOU CALLED IT 'MR. GRUESOME'!
THERE'S NO WAY YOU COULD HAVE KNOWN THAT! I NEVER TOLD THAT TO--
--HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT?
I KNOW LOTS OF THINGS! AND I WANT TO SHOW YOU--PROVE TO YOU THAT THE OLD STORIES ARE TRUE!
COME WITH ME TO ST. MARK'S HOSPITAL, AND I'LL SHOW YOU EVERYTHING!
THIS POOR WOMAN! SHE PROBABLY ESCAPED FROM THE PSYCHIATRIC WARD AT ST. MARK'S.
I'D BETTER GO WITH HER--MAKE SURE SHE MAKES IT BACK OKAY.

YOU SEE, MISS WONG, THERE'S A REASON THE OLD STORIES ARE STILL AROUND. THEY WERE CREATED BY THE CENOBITES AS A WAY OF ESTABLISHING ORDER.
CENOB--?
SHUSH! DON'T TALK. JUST LISTEN.

IT WAS FELT THAT THE BEST WAY TO RUN AN ORDERLY UNIVERSE IS TO REACH PEOPLE WHEN THEY'RE YOUNG.
CHILDREN ARE VERY TRUSTING, MISS WONG. THEY TEND TO BELIEVE ANYTHING THEY'RE TOLD--ESPECIALLY WHAT THEY'RE TOLD BY THEIR PARENTS ... OR TEACHERS.

THE OLD STORIES HAVE BEEN PASSED DOWN THROUGH THE AGES. THAT'S WHY YOU HEARD THE SAME STORIES YOUR PARENTS DID... AND WHY CHILDREN ARE STILL HEARING THEM TODAY.


EVELYN WONG HAS LIVED IN THE CITY HER ENTIRE LIFE. SHE DOESN'T REMEMBER EVER SEEING THIS HOSPITAL BEFORE.

IT'S STRANGELY QUIET. WHERE ARE ALL THE DOCTORS AND NURSES, EVELYN WONDERS... LET ALONE ALL THE PATIENTS?

EVELYN FEELS A COLD CHILL AS SHE WALKS DOWN THE EMPTY CORRIDOR; A SUBTLE FOREBODING, AS IF SHE'S BEING LED INTO A TRAP.
EXIT
THIS WAY, MISS WONG. I WANT TO TAKE YOU TO A VERY SPECIAL WING OF THE HOSPITAL...

AH, YES. HERE WE ARE. THE WING OF THE CHILDREN WHO DIDN'T BELIEVE. LET'S GO INSIDE.

OBSERVE, MISS WONG. WITNESS THE FATES OF THE UNBELIEVERS.
THESE ARE THE FORGOTTEN CHILDREN, THE UNWANTED; DOOMED TO SPEND THE REST OF THEIR LIVES PAYING FOR ONE SMALL SIN.
NEXT WE HAVE BRUCE, WHO FOUND THAT IF YOU KEEP MAKING FACES, YOUR FACE WILL BECOME STUCK LIKE THAT!
THIS IS STEVEN, WHO LEARNED THAT IF YOU TOUCH YOURSELF TOO OFTEN, YOUR PALMS WILL GROW HAIR, AND YOU'LL GO BLIND!
HERE IS TOMMY, WHO FOUND OUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SIT TOO CLOSE TO THE T.V. SET.
THEN THERE'S DAVID, WHO JUST FOUND THAT IF YOU DIE IN YOUR DREAMS, YOU DIE IN REAL LIFE!
FINALLY, WE HAVE JACK, WHO CROSSED HIS HEART AND HOPED TO DIE...SO SOMEBODY STUCK A NEEDLE IN HIS EYE!
OH MY LORD...
"THOSE POOR CHILDREN..."

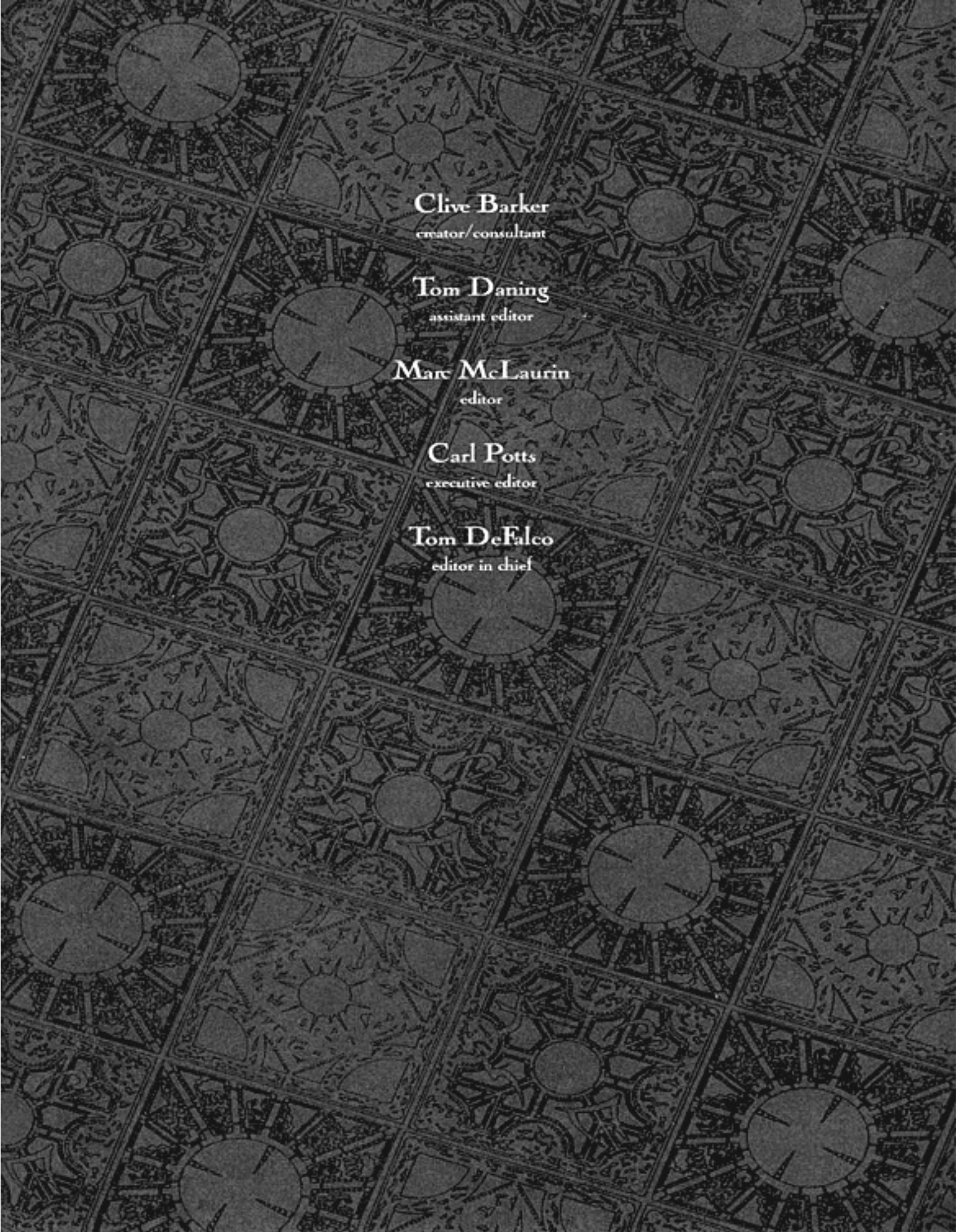
WHAT KIND OF HOSPITAL IS THIS? THESE CHILDREN NEED HELP!
I'M GOING TO GET A DOCTOR!
AND YOU... I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR CONNECTION IS TO ALL THIS, OR HOW YOU KNEW ABOUT THE MONSTER UNDER MY BED...
OH, MISS WONG... YOU STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND, DO YOU?
SOME PEOPLE NEVER DO--NEVER CAN. YOU'RE NOT ONE OF THOSE, ARE YOU?
THERE IS STILL TIME TO SHOW YOU.
MY GOD! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO YOU?!
NO ONE IS COMING TO HELP THESE CHILDREN. THEY ARE BEYOND HELP.
THESE TALES--THEY ARE A WAY OF INSTILLING ORDER IN THE MINDS OF THE YOUNG; OF STRUCTURING THEIR LIVES.
FOR, AS IN ANY WAR, THE VALUE OF PROPAGANDA CANNOT BE UNDERESTIMATED, AS A TOOL.
BUT IT IS ONLY A DEVICE--AS IS THIS FLESH--AND THE PUZZLE BOX IN YOUR POSSESSION.
YOU SEE, MISS WONG--I SERVE IN SUCH A WAR. MY FUNCTION IS AS THE GUARDIAN OF THAT BOX YOU TOOK FROM THE LITTLE GIRL.
OH!
AND I WANT YOU TO GIVE IT BACK!

WHEN IS THE LAST TIME YOU LOOKED UNDER YOUR BED, MISS WONG?
MR. GRUESOME MIGHT COME BACK IF HE FELT HE WAS NEEDED. YOU'D BETTER CHECK UNDER THERE AGAIN!
THE CHILDREN LIKE YOU, EVELYN WONG. THEY TRUST YOU. THEY KNOW YOU WOULD NEVER LIE TO THEM. SO, CONSIDER YOURSELF CONSCRIPTED.
N-NO! GET AWAY!
KEEP THE STORIES ALIVE, MISS WONG...
...AS IF YOUR LIFE DEPENDS ON IT!
NO!
NO!!
CLICK!
NO... IT'S... IT'S...
MONSTERS GO AWAY WHEN THE LIGHTS GO ON. EVERYONE KNOWS THAT.
...GONE.
BUT NOT FORGOTTEN.

SCHOOL, THE NEXT DAY.
MISS MARY MAC, MAC, MAC, ALL DRESSED IN BLACK, BLACK, BLACK--
SUZIE! BE CAREFUL!
WHAT?--
YOU ALMOST STEPPED ON A CRACK. REMEMBER WHAT HAPPENED TO TINA'S MOTHER!
BUT MISS WONG, YOU SAID THAT WAS AN OLD WIVES' TALE!
FORGET WHAT I SAID. I WAS WRONG
I WANT YOU TO HAVE THIS BACK. BUT BE CAREFUL WITH IT. IT'S VERY POWERFUL.
I-I'M AFRAID...
BE AFRAID, TINA. LET THE FEAR GUIDE YOU, TEACH YOU.
THE FEAR GIVES US STRUCTURE, AND KEEPS US ALL IN LINE.
SOMEONE HAS TO KEEP THE TALES, AND THE FEAR ALIVE.
SOMEONE HAS TO TEACH YOU...

THE END

AND THAT'S WHAT I DID ON MY SUMMER VACATION!
HOW CAN SOMEONE SO YOUNG BE SO FILLED WITH... ALL OF YOU!
WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?
NOT IN US, TEACHER!
Uh-huh! WE GOT IN THERE!
"THERE"? THERE WHERE?
WE TRIED TO SHOW SISTER--
BUT HER HAIR CAME OFF!
I DON'T ... I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
S'OKAY ... YOU WILL!
SUMMER SCHOOL'S OUT... THE END!



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In a bizarre summer session in the halls of hell, school is out, but the lessons are just beginning. First period, chart a teacher's journey through the ruthless and boundless imagination's of the children in her class, and a bizarre series of reports on "what I did on my summer vacation."

School was never like this — but horror ever was. . .

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